

**DEVELOPMENT, GENDER AND THE CRISIS OF  
MASCULINITY AMONG THE MAASAI PEOPLE OF NGONG,  
KENYA**

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## **ABSTRACT**

### **Development, gender and the crisis of masculinity among the Maasai people of Ngong, Kenya**

This thesis documents the impact of development on Maasai masculine identities in Ngong, Kenya since the advent of British colonial rule in the country. The study mainly utilises the theoretical perspectives of postcolonialism and the theory of hegemonic masculinities and employs qualitative and to a lesser extent quantitative methods to explore the impact of the forces of modernization on dynamics of gender relations and masculine identities over this period. The study shows that the colonisation of the Maasai was rationalised on the rhetoric of development, as a ‘civilizing mission’ where the colonial state saw itself as ‘trustee’ of the Maasai people’s interests. This entailed ‘Othering’ their way of life and by so doing justifying their subjugation. The thesis shows that this notion of guided development led to the deployment of forces which have subsequently led to radical alteration the Maasai pre-colonial nomadic pastoral way of life and thus their livelihood strategies and their lifestyles. This notion of trusteeship has continued through colonial to postcolonial times. Development for the Maasai has meant their contact with forces of modernization such as western education and Christian religion and other cultural influences. The thesis establishes that these developmental endeavours have had far reaching consequences not only for their pastoral subsistence strategies but also for gender relations and masculinities in particular. Development is shown to have resulted in greater socio-economic stratification and to more distinct hierarchies of masculinities. It concludes, among other things, by calling for caution when utilizing theories and concepts developed in the western context.

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## **Abbreviations/Acronyms**

<b>Acronym</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
AFC	Agricultural Finance Corporation
AIDS	Acquired Immunity Deficiency Syndrome
CBS	Central Bureau of Statistics
CRP	Chief Resource Male/Female
D.O.	District Officer
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
GAD	Gender and Development
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
MAAP	Maasai AIDS Awareness Program
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MGE	Men for Gender Equality
NACADA	National Agency for Campaign Against Drug Abuse
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
RA	Research Assistant
RF	Respondent Female
RM	Respondent Male
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
WB	World Bank
WID	Women in Development

## Glossary of Swahili and Maa (Maasai language) words

### **Swahili**

*Askari wa usiku*

*Chang'aa*

*Kiangazi*

*Maendeleo*

*Mali*

*Mbolea*

*Miraa*

*Mituba*

*Mzee*

*Pombe*

*Shamba*

*Vibarua*

*Wajuaji*

*Wajinga*

### **English**

Night guard/watchman

Alcoholic spirit

Dry season

Development

Wealth

Animal manure

Khat

Second hand clothes

Old man

Alcohol

Farm

Casual jobs

Sly

Ignorant

### **Maa**

*Emborokuai*

*Emuratare*

*Enkaibratuni*

*Enkanji*

*Enkanyit*

*Enkop ngeurk*

*Enkutoto*

*Entasat*

### **English**

Cattle trekkers

Circumcision

Newly circumcised female

Houses

Respect

New world

Local community

Older woman with circumcised children

<i>Esiankiki</i>	Married woman with young children
<i>Eunoto</i>	Ceremony that marks the status of a <i>moran</i> transitioning to a senior warrior
<i>Ilaisinak</i>	Poor men
<i>Ilaiyok</i>	Boyhood
<i>Ilmoruak</i>	Elderhood
<i>Ilajjik</i>	Age-grades
<i>Iloshon</i>	Sections
<i>Ilgilatin</i>	Clans
<i>Intonyie</i>	Young girls up to clitoridectomy
<i>Isaen</i>	Beadwork
<i>Koko</i>	Grandmothers
<i>Laigwenani</i>	Spokesman
<i>Manyatta</i>	Warrior camp/village
<i>Moran</i>	Young circumcised man
<i>Olamayio</i>	Lion-hunt
<i>Olamey</i>	Drought
<i>Olapuroni</i>	Thief
<i>Olcekut</i>	Hired shepherd
<i>Ol karsis</i>	Rich man
<i>Olowuaru</i>	Lion headdress
<i>Oltaika</i>	Long pigtails
<i>Orng'esherr</i>	Rite of passage from <i>moran</i> to elder.
<i>Osina</i>	Poverty
<i>Paashe</i>	Giver or receiver of a calf
<i>Yeiyo</i>	Mother of warrior



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# **Chapter One: Introduction**

## **1.1 Aims and objectives**

The general aim of this research is to broaden our understanding of the impact of 'development' on the gender dynamics among the Maasai people of Kenya in general and Ngong in particular. With a few exceptions, much of the research on gender and development in Africa has examined the plight of women and men have received comparatively little attention. Throughout the thesis, there is an attempt to uncover the driving forces that have shaped and continue to shape masculine identities of Maasai, which in pre-colonial times, were based on the pastoral ideal. An equally distinctive aspect of this thesis is in its appropriation of postcolonial theoretical approaches (also referred to as postcolonialism) to a study on gender and development. Broadly, postcolonial approaches are used here to uncover the hitherto marginalized/silenced voices of Kenyan Maasai men in the discourses and practices of development. We are thus better positioned to understand how power and control have been exercised in the discourses and practices of development and how for instance discourses of power and knowledge were used to shape Maasai identities during colonial times. Perspectives from the theory of hegemonic masculinity are also used to more clearly explore the power dynamics in gender relations. This helps us understand how masculine identities emerge and are transformed and how they relate to each other and to femininities. The thesis thus creates some space for dialogue between postcolonial theoretical approaches and the theory of hegemonic masculinities and blends them together to enrich our understanding of the dynamics of gender among the Maasai of Ngong.

The thesis contends that, by being drawn into the apparatus of both the colonial and post-colonial states, gender relations and subsequently masculine identities among the Maasai have been affected in varied and complex ways. It documents the resultant masculinities which are multiple, fluid, situated and at times contradictory and ambivalent and which are mediated by

the social categories of race, class, age, generation, gender, religion, and educational attainment and availability of social networks, among others. Indeed, contrary to the popular myth about the Maasai being the 'noble savages' unspoilt by civilization (Baxter 1990, see Kituyi 1990) and, by implication, frozen in time and space, the thesis establishes that for many a Maasai man, development/modernization has provided ever-increasing challenges as they adjust to the numerous changes around them. Such challenges include their dispossession through land alienation, the changing livelihoods and lifestyles such as individualization and commoditization of social and economic relations, and the resultant changes in gender relations.

Through an analysis of mainly qualitative and, to a lesser extent, quantitative data and information collected, the research uncovers the subtleties, complexities and ambiguities of power relations that help shape masculine identities in Ngong, Kajiado District. The research presents original findings that are valuable to theory and practice in the areas of gender and development. This introductory chapter first sets out the principle aims of the thesis (1.1), before presenting the contextual or background information for the research (1.2). The third section (1.3) provides the justification of the study while the final section (1.4) outlines how this thesis is organized.

### *1.1.1 Research questions*

Utilizing insights from postcolonialism and the theory of hegemonic masculinities, the thesis endeavours to answer the following three questions:

1. What are the major forces in colonial and post-colonial Kenya that have impacted on the Maasai pastoral nomadic lifestyles and livelihoods in Ngong over the past century?
2. In Ngong, how are gender roles and relations being negotiated and re-configured to cope with the demands of 'development'? and,
3. How have the forces/interventions in question one impacted on Maasai masculine identities?. In particular how has the crisis of masculinity been manifested among the

Maasai of Ngong or has 'development' created some opportunities for men? How have such opportunities affected their identities?

The goal of the thesis is to contribute in both theoretical and applied senses to the field of gender and development. It is specifically located at the intersection between contemporary concerns in geography and the broader social sciences and humanities about the twin issues of the 'crisis in development' and a 'crisis in masculinity', discussed in more detail below. Indeed, many studies have suggested that these crises are interlinked. This research attempts to situate and ground these concerns by focusing on the Maasai of Ngong. The study will inform debates on issues such as land reform, changing livelihood strategies, sexuality, patriarchy, drug abuse, consumption and identity.

## **1.2 Contextual/background information**

The African continent contains one-half of the world's pastoral peoples. These African pastoralists have depended on the raising of livestock such as cattle, goats, sheep, camels and donkeys, which are used for milk, meat, transport and trade. Over the last century however, the economic and social geography of African pastoral societies has been drastically influenced by forces of change such as the national state, the growing monetization and market penetration of local economies, the spread of education, and privatization of land tenure. They have been adversely affected by drought and famine, among other 'misfortunes'.

Research has shown that, rather than being passive victims of their environmental fate, pastoralists developed, over hundreds of years, mechanisms of adaptation to highly variable climatic, social and political environments. These mechanisms have been derived from generations of experience. In recent times however, sedentarization is rapidly occurring among pastoral populations throughout Africa and with drastic repercussions.

In Eastern Africa specifically, livestock-keepers have faced large challenges to their economies and way of life especially over the past several decades (Fratkin 2001, Markakis

2004). It has been noted that loss of land to large-scale indigenous and non-indigenous elites, trans-national corporations, farmers, land degradation, game parks and urban growth; intrusion of market economies, pressure on kinship relations, out-migration by the poorer pastoralists and the dislocations brought about by drought, famine and civil war are increasing throughout the region (Prior 1994, Fratkin 2001).

The Maasai are pastoralists who live mainly in southern Kenya and northern Tanzania. To cope with unreliable environmental conditions the Maasai, like other pastoralists, developed over the centuries - a system of seasonal grazing and watering that maximized the use of their environmental and human resources. This entailed adjusting to the spatial and temporal variations in pasture and water. During the wet season, they grazed their animals in the low-lying areas especially the Rift Valley floor and would move to the highland areas during the dry season. By virtue of their higher elevation these highlands receive more precipitation and lose the moisture at relatively lower rates than the lower areas because they experience lower temperature conditions. The highlands would thus be important sources of pasture and water during the dry spell. This pattern therefore required a flexible system of range utilization. A communal land management system allowed the Maasai to utilize resources in a sustainable manner.

The Maasai are well-known and their photographs dominate tourist guidebooks about East Africa and its wildlife. They are one of the main selling points of Kenya's tourism industry and their culture is commercialized and exploited the world over. However, this high degree of visibility obscures the fact that the Maasai in Kenya are among the most marginal groups in a country where poverty has increased dramatically, especially, but not exclusively, over the past few decades (Kenya 2001, 2002). Indeed, the literature indicates that the Maasai have become increasingly exposed to processes of marginalization and destitution (e.g. Coast 2002, Fratkin 2001, Galaty 1992, Gradin 1986, Homewood 1995, Luseneke 1996, Markakis 2004, Oyaya 1998, Rutten 1992, Talle 1987, 1988). Indeed in Kajiado District, from where the

respondents of this study were mainly drawn, the incidence of poverty is quite high and by 2002 was said to afflict 41 percent of the total population (Kenya 2002: 16). This thesis investigates the circumstances leading to this marginalization and destitution and the impact on gender and masculine identities among a selected group of Maasai people.

### **1.3 Justification/Rationale**

This thesis takes seriously Rastback's (2003) suggestion that dynamics in masculinities can be seen as a measure of how a society adapts to the pressure of changing times by documenting some of the effects of 'development' on Maasai men. The research is located within the wider context of the expanding literature on masculinities within geography (see e.g. Berg and Longhurst 2003, McDowell 2002, 2005, Van Hoven and Horschelmann 2005). Berg and Longhurst (2003: 353) also indicate that since the late 1990s, "something of a flurry of geographical research on masculinity, male identity and men has occurred". The geographical focus has however been skewed such that over the past two decades, most of the studies on masculinities have been carried out in developed country contexts, especially the USA, Australia and some parts of Europe such as Scandinavia, Germany, and UK (e.g. Adams and Savran 2002, Blod and Kaufman 1994, Connell 1987, 1995, Hearn 1989, Kimmel 1987, 2000 Law *et al* 1999a, Ruxton 2004, Sabo and Gordon 1995, and Whitehead 2002, among others). A vast literature on the subject now exists. However, there is evidence to suggest that the range is expanding and studies are emerging to fill the geographical gaps as evidenced by fairly recent collections of studies focusing on such places as the Caribbean (Reddock 2004), Japan (Roberson and Suzuki 2003), the Middle East (Ghoussoub and Sinclair-Web, 2001) and in Latin America (Gutmann 2003) and Africa (Miescher and Lindsay 2003, Morrell 2001, and a special issue on masculinities in the *Journal of South African Studies*, 1998). It is with this body of work that my thesis most closely associates.

My research investigates issues of development, gender and masculinity, issues which, as the literature review in chapter two indicates, have belatedly entered discussions of Gender and

Development (hereafter, GAD) (e.g. Chant 2000a, 2000b, Chant and Guttman 2002, 2001, Cleaver 2002, 2000, Cornwall 2000, 2003; Sweetman 2002 and White 1997, among others). These studies present a strong case as to why men matter in GAD studies and practice by pointing out that, as Cleaver (2000: 2) puts it, “recent changes in the economy, social structures, and household composition are resulting in a ‘crisis in masculinity’ in many parts of the world”. These studies also generally indicate that the ‘demasculinising’ effects of poverty and dynamics in the economic and social spheres may be compromising men’s traditional roles as providers and curtailing the availability of alternatives such as the role of men in families and the wider community (Cleaver 2002). While women in general may face greater social and economic disadvantages, men are not always the winners and generalizing about their situation risks overlooking gender-specific inequalities and vulnerabilities (cf Jackson 1999). As Cleaver (2002: 2) explains; “both men and women have a right to life free from poverty and repression”. Thus, “focus on men as well as women can help us gain a more sophisticated understanding of gender relations and how to impact upon them” (*ibid*: 24). Indeed, while feminist literature has correctly identified the feminization of poverty, it has, to paraphrase Morrel and Swart (2004), unfortunately often neglected the analysis of the consequences of poverty on men.

In the East African context, debates on masculinities are still fairly new. Among the Maasai of Kenya, the review of literature indicates that there are many studies that have been carried out in the past; “few populations are so well endowed with ethnographic literature as the Maasai” (Coast 2000: 259). These studies shed some light on the effects of development on Maasai masculinities, but they *lack an explicit focus on masculinity*. Thus one of my endeavours in this thesis is to unearth the silences imposed by this lack of explicit focus. In addition, literature shows that studies on gender among the Kenyan Maasai have by and large been about women (e.g. Kipuri 1989, Talle 1987, 1988) and none thus far systematically and explicitly discusses masculinities. Yet, the review of literature in this thesis indicates that the

development process generally affects women and men differently, while some of this literature more specifically suggests that modernization has impacted differently on Maasai men and women. The net effect has been that men's experiences with 'development' (as gendered beings) have been rendered invisible.

In Sub-Saharan Africa, over the past three decades, it has been widely documented that socio-economic change and the breakdown of traditional social institutions have left women in a disadvantaged and vulnerable situation with increasing burdens and responsibilities (Boserup 1970, Momsen 1991, Momsen and Kinnaird 1993, Talle 1987). These authors primarily relate this to women's alienation from crucial means of production, mainly land and livestock, and from products of their own labour. White (2000) insists that bringing men in to GAD must not mean replacing a focus on women with a focus on men, but should instead encourage a genuinely integrated and relational approach. This should include locating gender within broader dimensions of power and social difference, and recognizing its symbolic as well as material aspects. From the above discussion, it is clear that men's experiences of powerlessness remain outside the frame of GAD, pointing to a need for new strategies. My research expands these debates through its focus on the Kenyan Maasai context.

Dorothy Hodgson (1999, 2001, 2003) has carried out detailed studies on the impact of modernization on Maasai identity in Tanzania. The Tanzanian and Kenyan Maasai share numerous similarities and differences. The similarities are quite striking and include; relatively similar climate and natural resource bases, rapidly growing population of other neighbouring ethnic groups; common cultural groupings; and historical British colonial rule (Coast 2002). The differences are equally remarkable. Homewood (1995) for instance indicates that they have been subjected to very different development inputs by both colonial and postcolonial governments. Post-independent Kenya has (until recently) pursued policies that emphasize economic growth over equity, private sector development receptive to foreign



private investment, preservation and extension of colonial institutions and the maintenance of close ties with Britain (Coast 2000).

Tanzania on the other hand had until the late 1980s been typified by socialism, self-reliance, a more equitable distribution of the country's wealth, state intervention in and ownership of the economy, a reduction in reliance on agricultural exports, and forced villagization (*ujamaa*) of the rural population (cf. Barkan, 1994), although since the mid 1980s Tanzania's economic and political policies have come to resemble Kenya's capitalist path more closely. The national divergence in policies between socialist Tanzania and capitalist Kenya are highlighted within Maasailand. In Kenya, the impact of the privatization and commoditization of communal land has had profound implications for Maasai access to land. The development of ranching associations in Tanzania took place at the same time as the group ranches in Kenya, "however, that is where the similarity of these policies ends" (Coast 2002: 80). My research thus supplements Hodgson's studies by focusing on issues of gender and masculine identities among the Kenyan Maasai who, as we have seen above, have had a relatively different experience with development.

### **1.3 Thesis structure**

This study investigates the dynamisms in masculinity among the Kenyan Maasai. The thesis is organized along 'conventional lines' (Few 2000: 11). Following this introduction, which lays the foundations for the research, the second chapter thematically reviews debates, concepts and theoretical issues on gender and masculinities, development and postcolonial perspectives. In this chapter, I argue why this research is important and how perspectives from postcolonialism and the theory of hegemonic masculinities can yield some valuable insights for the research.

Chapter three then goes on to outline the research methodology, covering the rationale for the choice of methods used and how the data were collected and analyzed. Chapter four presents the socio-historical context of the study by focusing on gender organization of the Maasai at the eve of their encounter with the British colonial rule. Chapters five to nine present the data and analyses. Chapters five and six examine how colonial and post-independent state policies and practices since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century have impacted on the lifestyles and livelihoods of the Maasai people and how such interventions have affected gender relations (and subsequently masculinity). Chapter seven discusses the changing livelihoods and lifestyles in the study sites and how this impacts on masculine identities. Chapter eight on the other hand focuses on changing institutions associated with gender and masculinities such as the *manyatta* (warrior camp/village), the school, marriage, circumcision and so on, and how such changes have affected masculine identities. Chapter nine presents other markers of contemporary Maasai masculinities and also what I have referred to as ‘harmful masculinities’. In the later, masculinities are discussed as they are implicated in such issues as domestic violence, sexuality and drug abuse. The tenth and last chapter summarizes the findings of the research, gives some policy recommendations and offers suggestions for further research.

Each chapter of the thesis is divided into a number of titled sections and in some cases, subsections with a numbering system that reflects their interrelationships (such as 3.2, 3.2.1 and 3.2.2). The sections and sub-sections create ease of cross-referencing. Within the text body, italics are used (albeit infrequently) to emphasis key words and phrases. Italics are also used for words and phrases that are in a language other than English (mainly Swahili and Maasai languages) whose translation is offered within the text or in the glossary. Inverted commas around words and phrases are used to denote newly-introduced terms, terminology that is under discussion, specialized usage of words that may have broader meanings, terms in an ironic sense, and terms applied by others that have questionable application e.g. ‘native’. The contributions or quotes from specific interviews are referred to by code names in an effort

to preserve anonymity. Several appendices contain supplementary materials relating to the thesis research but which are not readily integrated into the various chapters.

The thesis attempts to uncover the driving forces that have shaped and continue to shape masculine identities of Maasai people in Kenya and the study area. This involves an approach that draws together the factors operating at different scales, from the individual, through the household, the local, the national to the global in order to 'situate the agency within the structural frame' (Few 2000: 10). The approach also incorporates a historical element. The nature of this endeavour also demands that literature is reviewed throughout all the chapters. The thesis has an interdisciplinary flavour, absorbing subject matter and methodological influences from various fields, among them, geography, development studies, sociology, history, anthropology and ecological studies. In a nutshell, this study, on the basis of historical sources, available ethnographic material and field research data, documents forms of change in the construction of masculine identities and the factors and circumstances surrounding these changes.

## **Chapter Two: Literature review**

### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter aims at locating my research on gender and masculinities within the broader debates on the discourses and practices of development, postcolonialism and the theory of hegemonic masculinities. In recent years the questioning of gender and identity has occurred across the social sciences and humanities, leading scholars and activists in the field of postcolonial studies, among other fields, to rethink the strategic role of identity politics in contemporary radical practice (Petersen 2003). I use both postcolonial perspectives and the hegemonic theory of masculinities in an attempt to articulate a clearer theoretical perspective on power relations that shape the dynamics of masculine identities among the Maasai of Ngong. Indeed, the importance of considering gender (and hence masculinity) in the analysis of imperial power relations has already been raised (Morrell 1998).

First, the discourse and practice of development is broadly but critically analysed with a view to creating some understanding of how development has been rationalized and deployed in its various facets among the Maasai of Kenya and the study area in particular. The development debate is traced from the enlightenment period. This is a complex endeavour and only a general overview can suffice in the context of this research. My contention here is that an understanding of these development debates sheds some light on how theory has informed policies and practices and how such policies and practices have influenced gender relations and masculine identities. This is in view of the fact that existing literature indicates that in their encounter with development, the Maasai have become increasingly exposed to processes of marginalization and destitution. As such, a critical focus on development will shed some light on how inequalities have been produced among the Maasai and the impact that these have had on masculine identities.

I then turn to a discussion of the origins and meanings postcolonial theoretical approaches. I argue that despite some weaknesses, postcolonialism has the potential to facilitate a deconstruction of the development discourses and practices in the Maasai context. Indeed, postcolonialism has been suggested as a useful tool in studies that endeavour to analyse the complexities of development paradigms and geographies (Radcliffe 2005) and for challenging the hegemony of Western histories, especially the way in which the “metaphor of development gave global hegemony to a purely Western genealogy of history” (Esteva 1992: 9, cited in Power 2003b: 54). As such it enables us to engage in the identity politics of representation and to deconstruct the ‘Othering’ of the Maasai, itself central to development discourse. The idea is to problematize this knowledge/power nexus which is used to subjugate and exploit the Maasai people and to reveal the impacts it has had on masculine identities. This way we are able to destabilize the narratives that construct the ‘Other’ and recover the subject positions of the marginalized. As Abrahamsen (2003) explains, such recovery is not so much a case of speaking on behalf of the marginalized, but rather is an attempt to mark the spaces of the silenced in conventional imperial history. Indeed, in the recent past, geographers theorizing postcolonialism have endeavoured to examine the ways in which people and places outside the developed ‘West’ are ‘Othered’ (Hubbard *et al* 2002). In my view, much of the material conditions among the Maasai today are a product of the way knowledge/power has been used to construct the colonial and neo-colonial Maasai subjects. I show this by using postcolonial perspectives to interrogate for instance, the impact of neoliberalism on Maasai masculine identities. However, these perspectives also allow us to map out resistances to domination and to view such resistance as the agency of the subaltern. In addition, it has been noted that relative to other regions, postcolonial perspectives have not yet been explicitly applied to the African context to any great extent. As such, my study hopes to broaden and enrich these perspectives by bringing in an African and in particular, Maasai context. This is also an important task given the recent renewal and reinvigoration of cultures of imperialism among European powers (Furedi 1994, Sidaway 2002). In summary, my research will also be

testing the applicability of postcolonialism in the African context in the sense of how it allows us to gain deeper insights into the complexities of colonial rule and in mapping the colonial continuities to post-colonial times among the Maasai.

In seeking a deeper understanding of Maasai masculinities, I turn to R. W. Connell's theory of hegemonic masculinities which he derives from Antonio Gramsci's (1971) idea of hegemony. This theory illuminates my study and my understanding of the dynamics of Maasai masculinities as it reflects the power dimensions in gender relations. This theoretical approach has been developed within the context of the so-called developed countries and my study aims to apply it in a non-western (African/Maasai) context. Thus by applying this theoretical approach in my study, I take cognisance of the fact that it is not a mere extension or replication as such an uncritical application would be misleading about the particularities of the Maasai context. Analysing Maasai masculinities is necessary because so far, studies on gender among the Kenyan Maasai have by and large been about women and no study has thus far explicitly and systematically dealt with masculinities. Yet, research indicates that the development process generally affects women and men differently (Momsen, 1991, Momsen and Kinnaird 1993). Indeed, Talle (1988), Coast (2002) and Kenya (2001) specifically suggest that development has impacted differently on Maasai men and women. This is also in line with Michael Kimmel's (2002: xi) assertion that:

“Today, although we understand that development is a gendered process, the impact of development on men remains relatively less understood”.

The theory of hegemonic masculinities facilitates a deconstruction of essentialist and ahistorical ideas of what it means to be male or female, arguing that such ideas ignore issues of power. The theory argues that power is not only exercised through the use of resources, but also through the use of ideological tools. The theory can therefore make visible the processes that confer privilege to some people and groups and not others. Greig *et al* (2000) for instance argue that such privilege is often invisible especially to those on whom it is conferred. This

then allows me to analyse the underlying dynamics of power in gender relations between men and women and also between men; and how inequalities are structured along the lines of gender, class, race, age, and the political, economic and cultural power relations that underpin the gender division of labour and the control of resources among the Maasai. In addition, it also allows me to seek out the perceptions men and women hold about 'proper' gendered behaviour.

Finally, the articulation between the debates and theories of development, masculinities and postcolonialism are presented with a view to offering a more unified framework that comprehensively inform my research. Or, in the words of Frances Cleaver (2002: 7) how we can:

“show how far dominant masculinities and gender relations in general are bound up with historical relations of economic and political dominance, particularly with the workings of imperialism and capitalism”.

As such, we are better positioned to understand how social, economic and cultural transformations of the Maasai in the colonial and neo-colonial eras are implicated in the dynamics in gender relations and masculine identities. To a large extent, the chapter serves as a contextual primer of the thesis. It is however, by no means, the only site of theoretical discussions and inputs from wider contextual sources. Further reference to literature and debates are developed in subsequent chapters as they become appropriate

## **2.2 Development, a failed project?**

This section presents a brief critical review of the development debate and locates this debate within the wider context of the contemporary concerns by geographers, other scholars, and practitioners about the crisis in development (see e.g. Crush 1995, Escobar 1995, Pieterse 2001, Power 2003a, Rahnema and Bawtree 1997, Simon 2003, Tucker 1995, Willis 2005). The following observation which Tucker (1995: 8) made about a decade ago serves as an appropriate preamble:

“Development as a practical and intellectual project has been steeped in optimism. Yet after decades of development, many areas of the world are worse-off today than they were thirty years ago”.

A good starting point in understanding the development debate is to trace its origins and dynamics up to the beginning of the post-war period. Obviously, it is difficult to cover the relatively long history of the development debate in the space available here. It is however, possible to draw out some of the major notions of growth, progress and development that have been formulated during this period (Power 2003a). Some of the debates and theories overlap, with some becoming more prominent than others in particular times and spaces. Such an approach to the development debate has been effectively used by others (e.g. Peet 1999, Pieterse 1999, Power 2003a).

### *2.2.1 The nineteenth century origins and meanings of development*

The purpose of tracing development historically up to the post-war period is to create a deeper understanding of, “the complex genesis of what came to be the unitary meaning of development that seemed to surface around this period” (Watts 1995: 49). It also helps us explore and appreciate the continuities and discontinuities in the development discourse up to the post-war periods. In discussions of these beginnings, the Enlightenment period in Western Europe in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries is crucial. Cowen and Shenton (1995, 1996) for instance trace the history of the meaning of development as a process that can be directed through the ideas of the Enlightenment period. This marked a major shift in the approach to understanding the world. Rational and scientific approaches to understanding the world and progress increasingly replaced earlier explanations based on Christian religion (Willis 2005).

Against this background of Enlightenment thinking, the literature points to two influences crucial to the emergence in Europe of the word ‘development’. These are the theory of evolution and the rise of industrial capitalism (Power 2003a, Pieterse 1991, Watts 1995). As



a consequence of the emergence of the theory of evolution, development has rarely broken free from organicistic notions of growth and from a close affinity with teleological views of history, science and progress in the West;

“By the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the central thesis of developmentalism as a linear theory of progress rooted in western capitalist hegemony was cast in stone” (Watts 1995: 47).

The modern idea of development can also be traced amidst early industrial capitalism in Europe. In this case it emerged to sort out the chaos emanating from progress and to create order out of the disorder of rapid urbanization, unemployment and subsequent poverty (Cowen and Shelton 1995). In this meaning, “‘development’ came to refer to remedies for shortcomings and maladies of progress” (Pieterse 1999: 5). The implication here is that attempts to bring about specific goals and efforts to fix the unintended consequences of these attempts are intertwined. This gave rise to the recurrent trope in development of the idea that development works on chaotic and disorderly situations (*ibid*). This language of ‘crisis’ and disintegration creates a logical need for external intervention and management (Crush 1995).

Another recurrent theme that is deeply entrenched in the discourses of development was the notion of ‘traditional’ societies, frozen in time and space and which, following Crush (1995), suggests a low status in the hierarchy of achievement, requiring redemption in the form of technology and expertise. As Power (2003a: 73) emphasises:

“The idea of the ‘light of reason’ shining a powerful torch into the dark recesses of ignorance and superstition in ‘traditional’ societies was a powerful and influential one at this time”.

Highly influential around this period also were the writings of the classical economists Adam Smith and David Ricardo. Smith championed the idea of a market-centred approach to economic development while Ricardo, himself also an advocate of free market approaches, developed the theory of ‘comparative advantage’ which in essence meant regions should produce what they were best suited for given their relative advantage over other regions. These classical economists’ belief in the market as a mechanism for maximizing efficient use of resources and human well being were to become a beacon for development thinking,

centred on neo-liberalism, after the Second World War (Peet 1999). Indeed, these basic liberal notions of free trade have come to dominate institutions such as the World Bank and other western institutions (Power 2003, Willis 2005). In the context of this research, the subsequent emergence of colonial economics and the related concept of trusteeship, discussed below, are quite important as they provide an idea of the process of colonization of the Maasai.

### *2.2.2 Colonial economics and the concept of trusteeship-1890-1930s*

This section provides my study with important insights about colonialism, which is central to a postcolonial analysis. In colonial economics and the related concept of trusteeship, the tropes of a 'traditional state' and of 'crisis' emanating from 'progress' readily found their expression. The meaning of development in colonial economics came to revolve around colonial resource control and management. The earlier stage of colonialism comprised of commerce by chartered companies, followed by plantations and mining while the later phase took on the form of trusteeship (Pieterse 2001). More specifically, the notion of trusteeship emerged as an important concept in debates relating to the question of harnessing nature and natural resources for social change in the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries (Power 2003a). In Enlightenment thinking, the remedy for the disorder brought on by industrialization was also viewed as related to the capacity to use land, labour and capital in the interest of the society as a whole (*ibid*). However, only certain types of individuals could be 'entrusted' with such a role and property thus needed to be placed in the hands of 'trustees' who could decide where and how society's resources could be most effectively utilized (Cowen and Shenton 1996).

This notion of trusteeship was important in the colonization of Africa in the late and early 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries respectively. More specifically, Murphy (1986: 59) informs us that:

"The imperial mandate of trusteeship, as a variant of the 'white man's burden', came to link imperial legitimization with notions of racial superiority and development".

For instance, according to the myth that had grown up about the exploits of the British imperial administration, the people of the colonies were governed much better than they could hope to govern themselves (Hetherington 1978). This ‘civilising mission’ entailed the devaluing of peoples and their cultures:

“Trusteeship in colonial administration was all about the mission to civilize others, to strengthen the weak, to give experience to the ‘childlike’ colonial peoples who required supervision” (Mercer *et al* 2003: 423).

Racial stereotyping was one of the hallmarks of that mixture of repression and paternalism, which became the distinguishing mark of British colonial rule in Africa. As such, the black was depicted as a contradictory figure:

“Half wild, half civilized, an animal with a human soul, and in this way the black image is made to conform with the requirements of the civilizing mission” (Sarup 1991:82).

More specifically in Kenya, the British colonial administration arrogated itself the duty of transforming one, ‘primitive’ order, to another, ‘superior’, order and depicted the individual African as:

“Artless innocent, - an image of grown-up childishness, irresponsible and unpredictable in which administrative paternalism found direct expression” (Berman 1990: 113).

In the post war period, the state, multilateral agencies and non-governmental organizations have come to play the role of “trustees” (Cowen and Shenton 1996). Having shown the relationship between colonialism and the ideas of development, let us then focus on development debates in the post-war era.

### *2.2.3 Post-war period and contemporary notions of development thinking*

The post war period has witnessed some significant changes in the institutions and discourses of development. Indeed, it has been pointed out that the term development in its present sense dates back from the post-war era of modern development thinking (Cowen and Shelton 1995, Pieterse 2001, Sylvester 1999) and a range of approaches to development thinking have since been relevant (see e.g. Escobar 1995, Pieterse 1999, Power 2003a, and Willis 2005, among others). However there remained some discernible continuities and persistence in the

underlying metaphors of development despite apparent changes in what Porter (1995) refers to as the 'fashion-conscious' institutional language of development since 1945. As Pieterse (1999: 39) observes:

“The formative period of ‘modern’ development economic theory was the 1940s and 1950s...‘colonial economics’ was transformed into ‘development economics’”.

Following the end of the Second World War, the modernization perspective, generated in the United States, became the dominant development discourse. In practice this meant subordination to US imperialism Munck and O’Hearn (1999). To create a general picture of the changes in development thinking in the post-war period, I provide discussions of the modernization and dependency perspectives, neoliberalism, alternative development and postdevelopment. These are very brief discussions and more comprehensive discussions are provided by others (such as Esteva and Prakash 1998, Peet 1999, Pieterse 1999, Power 2003a, Rahneman and Bawtree 1997, Rodney 1972, Sylvester 1999, Willis 2005, among others). The aim of this brief review is to provide a contextual background upon which postcolonial approaches have emerged and are subsequently discussed.

#### 2.2.3.1 Modernization theory and the Neo-Marxist/dependency thinking

Modernization theory emerged in the post war period as the dominant paradigm of economic, social, and political development which purported to explain the stages through which all nations pass on the road to industrial modernity. Europe had been weakened in war and pressure was mounting from within its colonies and from the major victorious powers, namely the USA and the then USSR, for political freedom of these colonies. Modernisation theory was thus coined to provide a rationale for a broad range of cultural and political projects aimed at fostering ‘Third World’ growth while simultaneously countering the perceived threat of losing these newly independent states to the Soviet Block (Abrahamsen 2001, Engerman and Haefele 2003, Power 2003a, Sylvester 1999). One can then say that modernization theory

was also a product of the early years of cold-war geopolitics and a tool devised especially by the US to extend its capitalist sphere of influence in the newly independent states.

The initial major exponent of modernization theory was Walter Rostow (1960) in his book, *Stages of Economic Growth*. Rostow formalised a strategy that advocated and promoted economic development and modernisation in the newly emergent nation-states of Africa, Asia and Latin America. As with the pre-Second World War notions of development, Rostow's ideas assumed that a linear process existed whereby developing countries progressively move from one 'traditional' and presumably 'backward' state to an ultimately and again presumably advanced stage of mass consumption. As such, modernization theory placed the blame of underdevelopment on internal factors such as illiteracy, traditional agrarian structures, the traditional attitude of the population (cultural values), low division of labour, the lack of communication and infrastructure (Khor 2002, Moles 1999). In other words, societies must drop traditional structures, cultures and values, and adopt those of Western Europe if they are to develop. For example, family systems are assumed to change towards a narrow conjugal form and away from the extended structure, in order to accommodate the individualism and occupational flexibility that is demanded by a modern complex economy undergoing continual transformation ([www.sociologyindex.com](http://www.sociologyindex.com)).

On the other hand, dependency theory, which emerged as the main counter to modernization theory in the 1960s and 1970s, explains underdevelopment as the result of unequal relationships between rich 'developed' capitalist countries and poor 'developing' ones. External factors like colonialism, the capitalist world economy and world market integration were considered responsible for the lag in the periphery's development (Rodney 1972, Rojas 1989) so that though such countries were formally independent, they remain economically dependent (Young 2001). The dependency thesis was subsequently developed into a general form of world systems approach by Immanuel Wallerstein (1984) who saw spatial relations as

exploitative through the flow of surplus from the periphery to the core, resulting in the periphery's perpetual state of backwardness inflicted by the capitalist centre (Peet 1999, Zapf 2003) which profits from the periphery's cheap, unskilled labour and raw materials (Pieterse 1999, Young 2001). As we shall shortly see, postcolonialism, one of the main theoretical tools of this research, borrows some concerns from dependency theory.

A number of criticisms have been levelled on both the modernization and dependency theories. Modernisation theory for instance is criticised for its cultural bias or ethnocentrism as it saw the path toward progress as one followed by the West (Leys 1996, Toppen 2004, Sylvester 1999). It has 'First World' cultures in mind and does not explain the experience of countries with different cultures and traditions such as those of Africa (Abrahamsen 2001). As such, differences in structure and historical origin are considered of little importance. This makes the theory's applicability in other areas of the world questionable (Munck 2000, Toppen 2004). In both the dependency and development theories, the question as to who would receive the benefits of development was not addressed. Sylvester (1999: 707) specifically points out that, "these concerns were lost in the under-theorising notions of 'trickle-down' or 'redistribution'". It has also been argued that dependency shared the same theoretical and discursive spaces as modernization approaches, prioritising the national scale and national territory and thus foregrounding state intervention (Power 2003a). Another common critique maintains that these theories are, "one-dimensional where modernization theory reduces the reasons for underdevelopment to internal factors, while dependency reduces the reasons to external factors" (Boeckh 1993: 114). This restricted their object of investigation to the economy of the country in the former while the latter restricted such investigation to external factors (*ibid*).

#### 2.2.3.2 Neo-liberalism

Neoliberalism is a set of economic policies that have become widespread during the last two and a half decades and is based on neoclassical economics that champion the supremacy of market mechanisms. Such ideas are viewed as liberal by its proponents in the sense of their emphasis on no controls in the economy (Peet 1999, Power 2003a). This application of individualism which encouraged 'free' enterprise and 'free' competition came to be associated with the freedom for the capitalists to make as huge profits as they wished with little due regards for their consequences of their activities for the wider society (George 1999). Another implication of competition as the central value of neo-liberalism is that the public sector must be trimmed because it does not and cannot obey the basic law of competing for profits or for market share (*ibid*).

#### 2.2.3.3 Alternative development

This consists of theoretical strands that are critical of conventional development theories and their inability to respond adequately to major political, social, economic and cultural issues (Peet 1999, Power 2003a, Sylvester 1999). It is also referred to as development from 'below' since it prioritises the community and NGOs and concerns itself mainly with poverty as opposed to the adjustments of the neo-liberal model (Sylvester 1999). Alternative development has been criticised for appearing to be progressive without being radical enough and without endorsing a clear ideology (*ibid*). The perceived failures of the various development approaches has led to a critique, which advocates moving away from such approaches altogether that is referred to as anti-development or post-development.

#### 2.2.3.4 Post/Anti-Development

The hallmark of postdevelopment thinking is its total rejection of development. It aims to give a voice to the excluded and seeks to break with the dominance of the West (Munck 1999,

Rahnema and Bawtree 1997). It also gives new emphasis to identities and place-specific practices (Power 2003a) thus valorising alternatives to development in a variety of places (Mercer *et al* 2003). Postdevelopment can be credited for further highlighting some of the failures of development by illuminating the plight and concerns of the victims of this failure. In addition, postdevelopment accounts of the emptiness of some modern/Western lifestyles are to be applauded (Corbridge 1998).

Postdevelopment however does not explain why many facets of development remain attractive to its purported victims and in addition rarely acknowledges some benefits that accrue from development. Postdevelopment thinkers have also been accused of failing to tackle alternatives constructively, romanticising poverty, fragmenting political struggle, overgeneralizing about the histories of development, reifying resistance and celebrating grassroots and indigenous groups (Mercer *et al* 2003, Radcliffe 2005). On the other hand, others such as Esteva and Prakash (1998) defend postdevelopment writing as not just involving a simplistic romanticisation of the indigenous or the privileging of the local over the global. They argue that while postdevelopment writings do build on previous streams of development thinking, this should not be seen as a weakness. Rather, it should be seen as an important attempt to re-engage development's past. Such concerns of postdevelopment of re-engaging development's past are also pertinent to my research on the Maasai and are much more developed and refined in the postcolonial approaches discussed below.

### **2.3 Postcolonial theoretical approaches**

In recent years, scholars in the disciplines of geography and development studies have made various forays into the burgeoning literature of postcolonialism and have mined it for new insights to enrich their disciplinary concerns (McEwan 2001, 2002; Yeoh 2001). Indeed, postcolonial ideas have been noted as worthy improvements on the political agendas of postdevelopment thinking (Radcliffe 2005). In this section, I argue that postcolonial



perspectives offer valuable insights for a critical analysis of the discourse and practice of development. I first discuss the origin and meaning of postcolonialism, the main critiques, and finally how some of these critiques can be overcome and in particular how my research endeavours to do so.

### *2.3.1 What are postcolonial theoretical approaches/perspectives?*

The term postcolonial *per se* was used for the first time in Bill Ashcroft's celebrated study *The Empire Writes Back* (1989) which deals mainly with cultural interaction in colonial societies and is "arguably one of the lynchpins of postcolonial thought" (Hall and Tucker 2004: 3). Ashcroft *et al* (1997) clarify that 'postcolonial' does not mean 'post – independence,' or 'after independence', rather, it begins from the very first moment of colonial contact. To many, postcolonialism thus comprises a variety of critical perspectives on the varied historical, geographical and other conditions under imperialism and colonialism and neo-colonialism. The central defining theme of postcolonialism is the investigation of the *mutually constitutive role* played by the North and the South in producing and reinforcing the identities of both in the colonial past and postcolonial present (Abrahamsen 2003, Rattansi 1997). The theory can overcome some of the limitations of previous approaches by highlighting the implications of the commonly unequal power relations in development, challenging the normalization of Eurocentric discourses, and capturing subaltern voices and embracing hybridities and pluralities (McClintock 1995, McEwan 2001, Willis 2005, Young 2003). It does not acknowledge the superiority of western cultures and works in the spirit of anti-colonial movements by further developing its radical political edge to enforce social justice worldwide (Young 2003). Along the same lines, critics such as Ato Quayson (2000), Frantz Fanon (1965, 1967), and Ngugi wa Thiong'o (1996) insist that the brutal realities of existence in the contemporary world have more to do with injustice, inequality and exploitation, all of which have to be dealt with through a vigorous and direct engagement with the capitalist social and economic forces that have historically shaped and continue to shape the African world.

Theoretically, postcolonial approaches have been greatly influenced by a variety of other approaches. These include the political economy of Marxism and dependency theories and the cultural and linguistic analyses of poststructuralism (Blunt and Willis, 2000, McEwan 2001). It also engages in productive alliances with deconstruction, cultural and gender studies and challenges the organization and assumptions of knowledge across many disciplines (Adams and Savran 2002). Indeed, postcolonialism does not reject earlier works, which sought to come to terms with the problems of the societies in Africa, Latin America and Asia, rather:

“It draws its critical energy and vitalization from those works, with the important caveat that it does not need to be entrapped within the confines of those discourses and head down paths similar to those that have led to the current theoretical impasse (Ahluwalia 2001: 11-12).

The theoretical origins of postcolonialism are generally attributed to Edward Said's (1978) landmark study entitled, *orientalism*, and “the development of the notion of the ‘Other’ in Western thought” (Hall and Tucker 2004: 3). *Orientalism* documents a lengthy tradition of constructing the ‘Orient’ as the imaginary antithesis of the West.

According to Said, Western discourse created a particular ‘Orient’ in order to justify economic, intellectual and moral superiority not only over its territories but also over its subjects (*ibid*). Postcolonial theorists have drawn from the notion of the ‘Orient’ in their conceptualization of *power* as emanating from knowledge or what Abrahamsem (2003) sees as the centrality of the concept of discourse in the power/knowledge nexus. Abrahamsen argues that power:

“resides not only in the state, or with capital, but operates through micro-technologies at specific locations to condition and constitute the minds and bodies of the colonized. Power, in other words, is not only repressive, but also productive of subjectivities and identities. This form of discourse analysis accordingly demonstrates how intellectual, economic and political processes worked together in the formation and maintenance of colonial power, and how ideas and institutions, knowledge and power cannot be understood separately. This conceptualization of power has not only helped to broaden our understanding of colonial relations, but has also generated powerful critiques of current political structures, institutions and practices of power” (2003: 201).

In his later work, Said (1993) made a case for *decentering* Western knowledge, which he found to be Eurocentric and falsely universalist. Said's work also led to the development of a 'colonial discourse theory' that was the focus of studies by Homi Bhabha and Gayatri Spivak as well (Bhabha 1984, Spivak 1993). Said assigned an important role to exoticism in the discursive representation of the Orient (Nagy-Zekmi 2003). Because exoticism is relevant not only in the representation of the oriental, but in the representation of alterity in general, the usefulness of this theory goes much beyond the Orient and it may be applied to postcolonial representations almost anywhere (*ibid*), such as in the case of the Maasai of Kenya who have been under colonial and neo-colonial influences for the last century.

Postcolonial theory's emergence can also be traced from anti-colonial movements in Europe, Africa, Asia and Latin America, tracing the development of a transnational third-world 'counter-modernity' through the work of major figures of the freedom struggles, including Cabral, Connolly, Fanon, Gandhi, Guevara, Nkrumah, Mao, Mariátegui, and Senghor, and through the roles played by women activists (Young 1999). They comprised a mixture of indigenous and diaspora anti-colonial intellectuals and activists who produced new ways of viewing and dealing with colonialism (*ibid*). The critical writings of other African intellectuals such as Ngugi wa Thiong'o (1986), Chinua Achebe (1959), V. Y. Mudimbe (1988), Mahmood Mamdani (1996), Chukwudi Eze (1997), and Kwame Appiah (1992) though often not explicitly using the term postcolonialism have also been quite instructive and inform my study on the Maasai through their critiques of colonial and neo-colonial relations especially in Africa.

Edward Said has however been criticized for presenting Orientalism in a rather monolithic manner, one that implies that the positioning strategies of Orientalism were always effective and casts the colonized as a perpetual victim and neglects forms of resistance, subversion, mimicry and hybridity with which the colonized actively responded to the coloniser (Bhabha 1994, Young 2001, Jack and Westwood, in press). This critique has led to the emergence of

the theme of *resistance* as another defining feature of postcolonial literature especially as manifested in notions of *ambivalence*, *mimicry* and *hybridity*. The notion of ambivalence was adopted into colonial discourse theory by Homi Bhabha (1994). It describes the complex mixture of attraction and repulsion that characterises the relationships between the colonizer and the colonized. For Bhabha, such ambivalence means that the colonized is capable of resistance to the colonizer and the colonizer is susceptible to influence from the colonized. *Mimicry* on the other hand is important in postcolonial theory as it describes the ambivalent relationship between the colonizer and the colonized. According to Ashcroft et al (1998: 139):

“When the colonial discourse encourages the subject to ‘mimic’ the colonizer, by adopting the colonizer’s cultural habits, assumptions, institutions and values, the result is never a simple reproduction of traits. Rather, the result is a ‘blurred copy’ of the colonizer that can be quite threatening. This is because mimicry is not very far from mockery, since it can appear to parody whatever it mimics”.

The concept of *hybridity*, which is also central to postcolonialism was developed by Homi Bhabha (1994) and recognizes that racial and cultural purity do not exist and that all cultures are to some degree hybrid. Hybridity has frequently been used in postcolonial discourse to mean simply cross-cultural ‘exchange’ (Ashcroft *et al* 1998). Many postcolonial writers also celebrate hybridity for its ability to take one beyond essential identities. With reference to Franz Fanon’s *Black Skin, White Mask* (1986), Rita Abrahamsen (2003: 205) probably captures this power of the notion of hybridity most vividly:

“Nowhere are these mutually constitutive identities better illustrated than in Franz Fanon’s haunting statement that ‘the Negro is not. Any more than the white man’. The white man’s self perception as moral, rational and civilized requires the image of the Negro as barbaric and uncivilized and the notion of hybridity in this way helps to breakdown the essentialized, binary opposition between the colonized and the colonizer, between black and white, self and other”.

In Homi Bhabha’s terms, hybridity demonstrates that the colonized were not passive victims whose identities were narrated in a one-way process by colonial authority, but rather hybridity signifies the failure of colonial power to fully dominate its subjects, and shows their creativity and resilience (*ibid*). Hybridity has however been criticised for negating and neglecting the imbalance of power and inequalities of the power relations it references (Ashcroft *et al* 1998).

In my view, used critically, the concept of hybridity has the potential of explaining the dynamics of culture and identity among the Maasai. Postcolonial perspectives however also have their own shares of criticisms.

### 2.3.2 Critiques of postcolonial approaches

“Now that postcolonialism has become a significant approach, it needs to be soberly assessed” (Ahluwalia and Zegeye 2003: v).

Postcolonialism has been criticized from a number of angles. One common criticism has been its emphasis on texts and discourses and its apparent neglect of empirical research articulating postcolonialism and global capitalism (Abrahamsen 2003, Cook and Harrison 2003). It has also not been “straightforward to adapt a largely literary approach to colonial texts into a framework taking on board people, places and contemporary identities” (Radcliffe 2005: 292). As such its theoretically abstract nature appears to be odds with the necessity to adequately link to the specific, concrete and local conditions of everyday life (Jacobs 1996, cited in Mercer *et al* 2003) such as poverty and equity in the ownership of natural resources.

Colonial discourse analysis in postcolonialism has also been criticized for legitimizing a renewed focus in the texts produced in the West instead of displacing them altogether (Nash 2002). Ahluwalia (2001) counters this by insisting that discourse analysis is varied and that the above critique is based on a narrow reading of the field and with a focus on Said, Bhabha and Spivak and their form of colonial discourse analysis. Most importantly, in my view, Ahluwalia points out that while these analysts made important contributions to postcolonial studies, the field is developing and evolving rapidly with an emphasis on the relationship between modernity, globalisation and the local, or: “the focus is now between the local and global and how the global is inflected in the local” (*ibid*: 12). In addition, a focus on

discourse is not necessarily an end in itself, but a focus on the material effects and practices that discourse makes possible adds to the strength of discourse analysis (Abrahamsen 2003).

Postcolonialism has also been criticised as being an endeavour of diasporic Third World intellectuals who have little to offer to the lived experiences of those in the former colonies (Dirlik 1994). However, while it is true that postcolonial theory largely emanated from diasporic intellectuals, we must not lose sight of the fact that, as (Ahluwalia 2001: 11) points out:

“It is possible only because of the shared experiences and ravages of colonialism therefore have to be seen as part of an on-going strategy emanating from the impasse and disillusionment caused by the failure of earlier theoretical formulations and paradigms such as dependency”.

It has also been argued that the prefix ‘post’ is inappropriate as it denotes and prematurely celebrates time after colonialism and elides continued neo-colonial processes, the endurance of colonial discourse, and the economic, political and cultural inequalities which persist long after formal political colonization has ended (McClintock 1995, Shohat 1993). As such it is accused of “locating the entire world in the traumatic and ultimately progressive trajectory of western development” (Nash 2002: 220) and thus it deliberately causes confusion as to the meaning of the term. Others such as Shohat (1993: 99) further argue that such acceptability “serves to keep at bay more sharply political terms such as ‘imperialism’ or ‘geopolitics’” (cited in Ahluwalia 2001: 4). In my view, this is a worthwhile suggestion as the prefix is misleading and indeed potentially dilutes postcolonialism’s radical claims.

Importantly for this research, postcolonial studies have also been accused of neglecting the African context. It has for instance been argued that while the successes of subaltern studies and postcolonial studies have meant a certain recovery of how the colonial subject is represented and objectified, much of Africa remains on the margins and has been rendered silent within postcolonial scholarship (Ahluwalia 2001, Ahluwalia and Zegeye 2003). In

addition, it is indeed misleading in the case of Africa that the term postcolonial should only mean 'after independence'. Rather, the concept should take into account the history of the European imperial incursions into the continent from the fifteenth century onwards (Ahluwalia 2001, Eze 1997, Mudimbe 1988). Chekwudi Eze (1997:4) captures this concern more accurately and comprehensively:

“By ‘colonialism’ we should understand the indescribable crisis disproportionately suffered by and endured by African peoples in their tragic encounter with the European world, from the beginning of the fifteenth century through the end of the nineteenth into the first half of the twentieth. This is a period marked by the horror and violence of the transatlantic slave trade, the imperial occupation of most parts of Africa and the forced administrations of its peoples, and the salient and enduring ideologies and practices of European cultural superiority (ethnocentrism) and ‘racial’ supremacy (racism)”.

On this account, let us now attempt to go beyond these critiques and show the relevance of postcolonial theoretical approaches to this research.

### *2.3.3 Beyond the critiques of postcolonial approaches*

The above critiques of postcolonialism require me to take cognizance of and strive to avoid some of the pitfalls of these approaches as I employ them in my research. Indeed, numerous studies in development geography and in development studies suggest that postcolonial perspectives have much to offer contemporary understandings of development issues. In particular, the perspectives provide “a powerful critique of ‘development’ and offers an increasingly important challenge to dominant ways of apprehending north-south relations” (Rangharam and Madge in press: 4). Ahluwalia (2001) on the other hand insist that rather than viewing the critiques and challenges to postcolonial approaches as a crisis to postcolonial theory;

“As processes of globalisation intensifies, we should see developments as positive, as part of the vibrancy of postcolonialism, at the very moment when other ‘posts’ – isms are being read as increasingly part of the dominant and hegemonic tradition of western theory” (pp. 1).

It is also argued that postcolonialism provides a conceptual framework which is of much value reflecting on a variety of issues pertaining to social and political inequalities and the

unevenness of the material world (Crush 1995, McEwan 2001, Mercer et al 2003, Yeoh 2001). Indeed, by adopting a postcolonial critique, we begin to question forms of representation, challenge European universalism and focus on the de-centring of the west (Kothari 1996). This is in agreement with the view that African cultural values (such as those of the Maasai) which were systematically denigrated by colonial ideologies and institutions, demand fair representation. Postcolonialism is concerned with the relations between power and knowledge, and practices and institutions, and, as Ahluwalia (2003: 109-110) points out, “provides theoretical and conceptual resources of particular pertinence to contemporary Africa”. It is also in line with the views of Ahluwalia and Zegeye (2003: v) who insist that:

“Lived experiences, subaltern selfhoods, new sites of liberation and resistance have been ignored and require fuller attention from theorists engaged in understanding African modes of being and contexts. It is within this development in postcolonial theory that new modes of writing are suggested. This writings should be firmly situated within historical-material frames, must free new places to theorise the multiple modes of being within everyday life in post-colonial Africa”.

In this regard, by “overlaying and etching the complex contours of the postcolonial debate onto a specific space with both material and discursive dimensions”, (Yeoh (2001: 254), my study in Ngong is well positioned to grasp the substance and overcome some of the criticisms of the postcolonialism. This is in line with the emphasis on the importance of the question of ‘locatedness’ in postcolonial scholarship (Robinson 2003). My argument here is that issues of poverty and the crisis in masculine identities among the Maasai cannot be separated from the historical and contemporary interventions in the name of development and the unequal power relations in the discourse and practice of development. All in all, by using postcolonial approaches means that there is at least the possibility of understanding the contemporary and material effects of past and current legacies of colonialism on the Maasai people of Ngong. As Nash (2002: 221) has it, “such crucial engagements often preceded and must continue long after formal political independence”.



Postcolonial perspectives in my opinion are appropriate in deconstructing the language of development as used in writings about the Maasai, examining how specific ideological formations and persistent normative assumptions and expectations have carried on from colonialism into development (Power 2003, Radcliffe 2005). In the area of gender, postcolonial critiques focus mainly on “gender and sexuality both as discourses mobilized by the texts they study and as aspects to the inscription of all subjectivities” (Childs and Williams 1997: 199). In my view then postcolonialism is not adequately positioned to articulate the gender dynamics of power for instance within the family structure (such as in gender roles and relations) and the local level. As Morrell and Swart (2004: 94) also point out, “what postcolonial theory does not do is show how subjectivities are shaped by class, gender, and geospatial context”. Thus to more comprehensively grasp the mechanisms of such power dynamics, I incorporate a theoretical framework for analysing the dynamics of masculinities.

## **2.4 Analytical framework for understanding masculinities**

This section provides a framework for analysing the dynamics of masculinities and supplements the postcolonial approaches thus facilitating a more comprehensive understanding of my research endeavour. As we noted in Chapter One, much of the theoretical work on men and masculinities originates from a developed country context and draws on a range of intellectual traditions and are inspired by scholars from diverse disciplines. Their concerns have partly been fuelled by popular fears of a ‘crisis’ at the heart of modern masculinity (Van Hoven and Horschelmann 2005). Our main focus in this section is the theory of hegemonic masculinity as postulated by R. W. Connell and elaborated by other scholars. In order to appreciate and better understand this theory I provide a brief background by discussing prior approaches to the study of masculinities, commonly referred to as non-feminist approaches to masculinities.

#### *2.4.1 Non-feminist theories of masculinity*

The two main non-feminist approaches to the study of masculinities are generally recognized as psychoanalytic and male sex-role theories (Connell 1995). Psychoanalytic theory assumes an underlying biological reality of drives that men and women equally possess and attempts to account for masculine nature and power with reference to biology and physiology. A key proposition is that gender is acquired through the Oedipal process of identification and the repression of instinctive desires (see for instance Connell 1995: 3-21, among others). More recently, psychoanalytic theory has emphasised the conflict and uncertainties that arise for the male psyche from the gendered socialization in childhood, emphasising that it results in a constant need to prove oneself as male (Edley and Wetherell 1996, Van Hoven and Horschelmann 2005).

Until the 1980s, sex-role theorists dominated theoretical work on masculinity. Sex roles are seen as the prototypes in which identities of men and women are forged by means of socialization (Law *et al* 1999b). The theory thus suggests that a socially predetermined number of appropriate 'sex roles' are assigned to individuals according to their biological sex. Luyt (2003) further explains that as a result, acquiescence to gender suitable behaviour is seen to occur in response to normative expectation, which if unmet, results in negative social sanctions. The implication for men here is that status is determined by one's ability or otherwise to comply with social norms of masculinity. The theorists of sex roles approached masculinity as a socially institutionalised role, learnt through the home, school, the media, the community, peer group, and the demands of the economic system (Leach 1994, Van Hoven and Horschelmann 2005). Non-feminist theories of masculinity have been heavily criticised for their essentialism. Essentialism assumes that there exists a relatively stable 'masculine essence' that defines men and distinguishes them from a 'feminine essence' that defines women (Petersen 1998). This implies a limit on the variations of change and thus social

reorganization and for this reason has been a central concern to contemporary feminists and other critical theorists (Petersen 2003).

By ignoring essentialising gender differences and thus ignoring issues of power, non-feminist theories have subsequently been widely criticised for ignoring persistent injustices to women (hence the label 'non-feminist'). This is because these frameworks focus on gender differences rather than gender relations and as a result, tend to assume a relationship of complementarity between masculinity and femininity, as opposed to one of power (see Leach 1994). As Nurse (2004: 5-6) puts it:

“By essentializing gender differences in the biological, the ‘natural’, makes invisible the structural and systemic bases of power in gender relations”.

As such, these theories undervalue the power relations that position men and women differently and develop a rather static and prescriptive image of gender identities. Thus they do not allow for the investigation of the impact of power dynamics on gender relations and identities. But while most contemporary theorists reject essentialism, some recognize the necessity of occasionally employing essentialist descriptions for strategic reasons. Gayatri Spivak, a well known postcolonial theorist, calls this 'strategic essentialism' (Spivak 1990) and argues that essentialism can for example be used to right the wrongs that have been done to particular groups, as in the case of when affirmative action is used to create gender parity such as in education. The related 'positive discrimination' policies are designed to “favour disadvantaged groups within a society, in order to reduce if not eliminate inequality” (Johnston *et al* 2002: 605). In Kenya such policies are used in attempts to bridge the gap between men's and women's access to university education by admitting women with lower prior attainments than men.

Non-feminist approaches have also been criticised for being ahistorical as they cannot account for cultural differences or historical redefinitions of masculinity and assume that gender is made up of attributes rather than actions (Law *et al* 1999b, Leach 1994, Kimmel 1987).

Comparative social research however show that there is no such thing as universal masculinity that has existed across time and space (cf Coltrane 1994, Connell 1993, 1995, cf Fausto-Sterling 1992), and that there may even be more differences within genders than between them (Van Hoven and Horschelmann 2005, cf Segal 1993). This then calls for approaches that go beyond these theoretical shortcomings, as discussed below.

#### *2.4.2 Pro-feminist theories of masculinity*

Since the 1980s, a new body of literature on masculinity emerged drawing on feminist ideas on gendered relations and gender identity. Drawing from the emancipatory visions that feminist writers articulated, pro-feminist studies of masculinities have worked to denaturalize and problematize masculinity and patriarchy in an attempt to reduce its hegemonic salience while simultaneously trying to include men as relevant analytical categories within studies of gender (Law *et al* 1999., Petersen 1998, Yates 2003). This has culminated in what is now commonly referred to as pro-feminist theories of masculinity or what others have referred to as Critical Studies of Men, in which the centrality of power is recognized (Hearn 2004, Yates 2003). Ouzgane and Coleman (1998: 2) explain that:

“Profeminist studies of masculinities operate with a combination of discontent and hope. They are discontent with the status quo. They do not celebrate the ‘family values’ of male privilege and control. Nor do they long for the patrimonies of kings and warriors and iron men, for they recognize the dangerous nostalgia for dominance linked with these images”.

Generally, pro-feminist writers contend that men have power regardless of whether or not they feel powerful. Kaufman (1994) refers to this as men’s contradictory experiences of power i.e. men do not experience a subjective sense of personal power, yet at the same time have and exercise power both as individuals and as a class. The most significant pro-feminist attempt to outline a comprehensive theoretical framework for understanding masculinity is widely accepted to be the work of R. W. Connell (1987, 1995, 2000, 2002, 2003) and particularly his theory of *hegemonic masculinities* discussed below.

#### 2.4.2.1 The Theory of hegemonic masculinities

The central argument in this theory is that masculinity is never fixed and should not be viewed in the singular as 'masculinity' but rather must be viewed as 'masculinities' (Connell 1995, Yates 2003). Subsequently, Connell developed the ideas of dominant/hegemonic and other forms of masculinities, often referred to as the theory of hegemonic masculinity. Connell derived the concept of hegemonic masculinity from the works of the Italian Marxist thinker, Antonio Gramsci (1971), who argued that conceiving of inequalities and oppression purely in terms of capital relations was inadequate, and instead insisted on a more nuanced understanding of power (Hubbard *et al* 2002). The concept thus rises above explaining domination on economic grounds alone and brings in ideological explanations. Mike Donaldson (1993: 645) provides a comprehensive description of the concept as:

“...about the winning and holding of power and the formation (and destruction) of social groups in the process. It is about the way in which the ruling class establishes and maintains its dominance. The ability to impose a definition of the situation, to set the terms in which events are understood and issues discussed, to formulate ideals and define morality is an essential part of the process. Hegemony involves persuasion of the greater part of the population, particularly through the media, and the organization of social institutions in ways that appear ‘natural’, ‘ordinary’, ‘normal’. The state, through punishment for non-conformity, is crucially involved in this negotiation and enforcement” (quoted in Hearn 2004: 54).

Essentially then, Gramsci's interest lay in the 'organization of consent', in the sense of how particular sets of ideas, beliefs and values came to be accepted as desirable, inevitable and taken for granted thereby allowing a particular version of society to become accepted as common sense (Hubbard *et al* 2002). In particular, Gramsci's concern revolved around how capitalist elites are able to maintain social control through the manipulation of ideological resources, in spite of the contradictions of capitalism (Law *et al* 1999b). He sees hegemony as the means by which capitalist relations of exploitation come to be accepted as natural and right by the working class through ideology (*ibid*). Put in a simpler way, Gramsci argued that

if you can win peoples' minds, their hearts and their hands would follow suit (George 1999). Thus, as Law *et al* (1999b) suggest, the oppressed remain complicit in their own exploitation so long as they are unable to discern the material basis of their oppression. This hegemony is however subject to contestation and resistance and thus depends on the capacity of the elite to control the production of ideology in society (Connell 1995, Law *et al* 1999b, Yates 2003).

Connell utilized Gramsci's idea of hegemony in an attempt to deal with "the relational issues of masculinity" (Cleaver 2002: 7). In this way Connell recognized that there are power differentials in gender relations. The relationships between the four hierarchies of masculinities (hegemonic, complicit, marginal and subordinate) are constructed through practices that exclude and include, intimidate and exploit and relate the idea of what it means to be male in particular situations and particular historical junctures (Nurse 2004, Yates 2003). As such, the contours of these masculinities change over time, "being affected by changes elsewhere in the society and at the same time, themselves affecting society itself" (Morrell 1998: 607). The four categories in the hierarchy represent various abilities to cash in on what Connell calls the 'patriarchal dividend', or the advantage men in general gain from the overall subordination of women. Connell saw *hegemonic masculinity* embodied in different forms in society but, more so, it represented the patriarchal idea of manliness (Yates 2003). In this context, Connell defines hegemonic masculinity as:

"the current configuration of gender practice which embodies the current answer to the legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and the subordination of women" (1995: 77).

Thus hegemonic masculinity subordinates, co-opts, or marginalises other forms (as well as women) and is established through 'correspondence between cultural ideal and the institutional power' (1995: 77). As such, men as a group, especially those with higher incomes, hold a relatively powerful structural position in relation to women and younger men, men with lower incomes (or as is often, a combination of these factors) (Ruxton 2004). As a result of this structural relationship, Ruxton (2004: 9) further contends:

“Men in the subordinate group feel entitled to the patriarchal dividend, but in practice do not see how they benefit from it. This situation is often a cause of male hostility and aggression, particularly toward other groups, such as women and children”.

Along this line, Connell further argues that hegemonic masculinity can be seen as a masculine strategy for maintaining the economic, political and sexual subordination of women, and an ideological process of articulating that strategy. This strategy is visible and diverse and ranges from the mass media, wage structures, welfare policies, the design of housing, to judicial attitudes to rape cases (Leach 1994). Connell reaffirms the link with Gramsci’s analysis of economic class relations through the operation of cultural dynamics and notes that hegemonic masculinity is always open to challenge and possible change (Hearn 2004). As Morrell emphasises:

“It is constantly responding to challenges, accommodating, or repelling rival representations of masculinity and in this process depends less on straight coercion and more, as Gramsci argues, on developing a consensus” (Morrell 1998: 608).

The idea of hegemony can also provide some useful insight in the understanding of the process of ‘Othering’, central to colonial discourse. For instance, Nurse (2004) points out that the subjectification of the ‘other’ through ‘difference’ (stigmatization, stereotyping and so forth) has proved fundamental to the constitution of hegemonic masculinity. Thus the interplay of ‘otherness’ and ‘difference’ is considered a vital mechanism of governance, as in the case of colonial discourse (Bhabha 1994, cited in Nurse 2004). Nurse (2004) pushes the argument further by arguing that, paradoxically, this involves an ambivalent and circuitous position in that:

“it also makes difference powerful, strangely attractive precisely because it is forbidden, taboo, threatening to cultural order...Thus it implicates the subjects of power as well as those who are subjected to it” (quoting Hall 1997: 237-263):

According to Connell (1995), *complicit* masculinities include the masculinities constructed in ways that realize some patriarchal dividends, without the tensions or risks of being what he refers to as “the frontline troops of patriarchy” (pp. 79). It is however recognized that most masculinities are complicit in patriarchy or tied together through the oppression of women,

and that the marginalization of subordinate masculinities is an essential component in the reproduction of the myth of male power (Kimmel and Messner 1995).

Marginalization refers to the relations between masculinities in different classes or racial groups. *Marginalized* masculinities are excluded from most of the patriarchal dividends, but can derive meagre benefits because they can be used as exemplars or supports of masculine authorization. Located at the bottom of the power hierarchy are *subordinated* masculinities. Subordination recognizes that “there are specific relations of dominance and subordination between groups of men” (Connell 1995: 78). Connell perceives these relationships mainly in terms of sexuality and refers to the dominance of heterosexual men and, subordination of homosexual men in contemporary European/American society.

Connell however cautions us that terms such as ‘hegemonic masculinity’ and ‘marginalised masculinities’, “name not fixed character types but configurations of practice generated in particular situations in a changing structure of relationships” (1995: 81). As such, identifying individuals as strictly belonging to any of the categories is quite difficult. Morrell (1998: 607) captures this complexity more aptly when he observes that:

“Contestation between these masculinities occurs but it needs to be understood that these analytical categories are themselves fluid and hence ‘membership’ difficult to identify. Yet it is important to drive toward a conceptual arrangement that allows us to make sense of the power aspect of masculinity”.

But like most other scholars of pro-feminist masculinities, Morrell acknowledges that the idea of hegemonic masculinity is still the best vehicle for analysing masculinities.

The theory of hegemonic masculinities is a useful tool for understanding the dynamics of gender relations and masculinities as it shifts the focus of analysis in a number of ways, which helps us analyse the dynamics of gender and masculinities among the Maasai. For one, the differentiation in relations between masculinities suggests that masculinities are simultaneously inherently relational to each other (in that they are constituted in relation to other masculinities) and to women and they should be viewed as projects that are constantly



being constructed, collectively as well as individually (Connell 1995). This is in line with Judith Butler's (1990) assertion that gender attributes are performative rather than expressive and is, "one useful tool in displaying the hegemonic discourses of colonialism and masculinity since it reveals the constructedness of gender identity" (Hassan 2003: 322). In addition, the conceptualisation of masculinities as multidimensional entails recognizing that there is no universal masculinity and gender relations are intertwined and differences among men exist according to attitudes, beliefs, situations, practices, and institutions along lines of race, class, sexual orientation, religion, ethnicity, age, religion, physical appearance, able-bodiedness, mental ability and nationality, and various other categories with which we describe our lives and experiences (Law *et al* 1999b, Nurse 2004, Ruxton 2004). Connell also advocates an engagement with the history and contingency of hegemony by exploring the various political and economic contexts and projects that resulted in particular versions of masculinity becoming dominant in particular times and places (Law *et al* 1999b). In this way, the theory rises above the ahistoricity of non-feminist theorisations of masculinities.

In addition, analysis shifts from men as observable entities on the one hand to masculinity as sets of social practices and beliefs on the other (Law *et al* 1999b). This allows us to view the nature of gendered diversity within a society as multiple, contested, and at times contradictory (Roberson and Suzuki 2003). The ideas of hegemonic, subordinate, complicit and marginal masculinities are useful in the context of this thesis in that they reflect the power dimensions in gender relations (Cleaver 2002) so that gender relations are seen not simply as relations of difference (Brod and Kaufman 1994). This allows us to move beyond the limitations of sex-role theory and explore the power dynamics that underpin gender relations and the implication of this for Maasai masculinities. As such, rather than viewing men's power as given, attention shifts to exploring men's power as contingent on defence of a specific version of masculinity against the other groups that might contest their hegemonic or dominant positions (Connell 1995, Law *et al* 1999b).

The theory also allows us to further critically explore the *negative impacts of masculinities* as men attempt to defend some restrictive versions of masculinity. Conforming to such rigid definitions of masculinity (e.g. be tough, compete, don't cry), Ruxton (2004) argues, can lead to disengaged fatherhood, ill-health, aggressive behaviour, overwork, and inadequate emotional responsibility. She however cautions that acknowledging effects such as these can slip too easily into making misleading claims that men are 'losing out' to women, to even being 'oppressed' by them. This perspective enables my research to explore how masculinities are implicated in issues such as drug abuse; sexuality and reproductive health; and domestic violence. In addition, the idea of multiple masculinities also allows us to explore how categories such as age, sex, class, ethnicity and so on influence the dynamics Maasai masculine identities.

We are also able to conceive the *global dimensions* of masculinities which is the notion that masculinity is closely linked to broader societal structures of power. It has for instance been argued that hegemonic masculinities are often based on economic success, racial superiority, and overt heterosexuality and that is reinforced, especially in developed countries, by the growth of transnational business and the wider circulation of symbols and imagery of individualism and competition (Ruxton 2004). In this regard, Michael Kimmel (2000) also argues that crucial to our understanding of the integration of masculinity into the study of development, is to recognize the way in which globalisation reconfigures and reshapes the arena in which national and local masculinities are articulated, and transforms the shape of domestic and public patriarchies. This study contextualises these concerns in a local Maasai situation.

Kimmel's view connects somehow with what R. W. Connell (2003) calls 'the world gender order' or the structure of relationships that interconnect the gender regimes of institutions and

the gender order of societies on a world scale. Connell explains that imperial conquest, neocolonialism, and the current world system of power, investment, trade and communication, have brought very diverse societies in contact with each other. He further argues that neo-liberalism has an implicit gender politics, for instance, the de-regulation of the economy in a corporate world places strategic power in the hands of a particular group of men namely managers and entrepreneurs. Connell then argues that; “this is the broad context in which we must now think about the lives of men and the construction and enactment of masculinities” (2003: 5).

Nurse (2004) carries the argument further by pointing out that the collusion between patriarchy and masculinity operates in a global politics as well. Thus this ‘masculinity problematique’ (Nurse 2004: 16) is implicated in the Western imperialist project in which, non-Western societies have been, since the beginning of the European colonial expansion, constructed and represented as effeminate and infantile to distinguish them from the hegemonic forms (Nurse 2004) (this opinion is also shared by postcolonial theorists in their concern with representation). They have thus been racialised and sexualised to justify their oppression (Connell 1995). However, borrowing from Pease and Pringle (2001), Ruxton (2004) further argues that although the forces of globalisation are having an increasing influence on the development of gender relations, local diversity remains significant. This provides an important insight to my research in the analysing of the articulations between the local and the global in a Kenyan Maasai context and the impact of such articulations on identity.

Furthermore, the theory of hegemonic masculinities enables us appreciate the *dynamic nature of masculinities*. This is the view that masculinities change and are displaced over time in relation to historical events and changing economic and social relations (Connell 2003). This is relevant to my study in the analysis of how historical circumstances are implicated in the

dynamics in Maasai masculinities over the past century. The idea of hegemony also leads to what Connell refers to as *collective masculinities* which is the idea that masculinities are also collectively constructed within cultures, groups, and institutions, such as the classroom and the mass media (Connell 1995).

Connell's theorising has however been criticised for its reification of masculine experience through its emphasis on the structuring effect of social categories such as 'race', class and sexuality, thereby reducing the complex nature of individual male experiences (Luyt 2003). This notwithstanding, the hegemonic theory of masculinity provides some useful ground upon which we can explore masculine experiences among the Maasai. Let us then further explore the articulations and tease out the intersections between masculinity, postcolonialism and development and how this has aided this research.

## **2.5 Development, postcolonialism and the theory of hegemonic masculinities: articulations**

Our discussion of the theories of masculinities and postcolonial perspectives thus far suggests some shared concern especially on the issues of power and representation. Indeed, I agree with the contention by Law *et al* (1999b) that one of the most substantial contributions masculinity studies can make to postcolonial criticism is in the analytical apparatus of a hierarchy of masculinities. Like the theory of hegemonic masculinities, postcolonialism is also concerned with subverting essentialism, "it is predicated on subverting the 'essentials'" (Morrell and Swart 2004: 95). As such these two theoretical perspectives can be seen as reinforcing each other thus allowing for a more comprehensive analysis in my research. This section aims at making this clearer and thus creating a better appreciation of how postcolonialism and debates on masculinities inform each other in the analysis of development. We first focus on feminism's contributions in linking postcolonialism with gender studies and how eventually masculinities entered postcolonialism mainly through the

work of Frantz Fanon. We then critically focus on how the paradigmatic shift in mainstream development from WID to GAD has implications for both postcolonialism and the study of masculinities.

### *2.5.1 Feminism and postcolonialism: the shared concerns*

The concerns of feminism and postcolonialism intersect variously and inform each other. Childs and Williams (1997: 88) probably summarise these intersections best and are worth quoting at length:

“Feminism and post-colonial theory have much in common as oppositional discourses which attempt to redress an imbalance in society and culture. Both began with strategies that aimed to upset dominant hierarchies and recover and reassert marginalized histories and writings. Both have also since turned toward analyses of the construction of those hierarchies, categories and canons, questioning the systems of thought and forms of critical legitimation behind them. The interrogation of dominant structures of society and language has been a common and sometimes shared project”.

It is now widely acknowledged that feminist scholars introduced questions of gender to postcolonial studies. This resulted from the criticism that non-white feminist women levelled against feminist theory's implicit assumptions by middle-class western women (Adams and Savran 2002, Childs and Williams 1997, McEwan 2001, Young 2003). They rejected the image of the Third World woman as uniformly poor and powerless in contrast to the modern ideal of the Western woman.

These feminists further argue that the subaltern woman was marginalized not only by patriarchy but also colonial and neo-colonial power. They also disputed the one-dimensional representation of the narratives of a passive victim in texts written by western feminists (Amadiume 1987, Oyewumi 1997, Mohanty 1991, Spivak 1988). For instance, they argued, the mere existence of a sexual division of labour is frequently claimed as proof of the oppression of women, although there is little attempt to understand its meaning and value within different cultural contexts, to consider that in a particular cultural context it may even be empowering for women (Arnfred 2004, Kothari 1996). Indeed, in numerous African communities, women have held as much power as men, if not more, for instance in some

parts of Mozambique (Arnfred 2004) and Malawi (Mwale 2002). In addition, many black and 'Third World' activists rejected western feminisms' depiction of men as the main source of oppression. Instead, they insist that in many cultures, black women often feel solidarity with black men and do not advocate separatism as they struggle with black men against racism and against black men's sexism (McEwan 2001). In summary, postcolonial feminist struggles are directed against the postcolonial state as well as against western interests that enforce its neo-colonial status (Young 2003).

It is however widely recognized that the study of masculinity within the colonial and postcolonial contexts began with the work of Franz Fanon. As Adams and Savran (2002) explain, Fanon achieved this through his analysis of the debilitating effects of colonialism on non-white men. His book, "*Black Skins White Masks*" (1952), situates the problem of masculinity as one of the originary preoccupations of anti-colonial thought (*ibid*). Because of his concern with the impact of colonialism, on the psyche, Fanon is acknowledged as the precursor of psychoanalytically-informed postcolonial criticism. Adams and Savran (2002) further argue that this allows access to the phantasmatic dimensions of colonialism, the fantasies of racial and gendered inferiority that accompany the political and sociological aspects of empire. Understanding and deconstructing these fantasies is pertinent component of Fanon's attempt to articulate an anti-colonial nationalism (*ibid*).

Having reviewed the initial impetus provided by postcolonial feminists to the broad area of postcolonialism, we may then ask: How did the concern with masculinities and postcolonialism enter mainstream development thinking and how does it inform this research? In the mid-1960s some feminist economists such as Ester Boserup, author of *Women's Role in Economic Development* (1970), noted that development was not happening as hoped, particularly for women. This led to an unprecedented focus on women among activists, scholars, practitioners and policymakers in the 1970s and 1980s. Translated into social action

in the so-called Developing Countries, 'gender' was then taken to be synonymous with 'women' (White 1997). This led to the emergence of 'Women in Development' (WID) thinking, focusing on women but largely failing to challenge western gender stereotypes such as the sexual division of labour (Jolly 2002). Later critiques contributed to the emergence of Gender in Development (GAD), which constituted a change toward recognizing the need to analyse social relations between men and women (gender relations) in addition to being more conscious of such factors as class, age and personal agency in this (Cleaver 2002). It also meant a shift in development thinking to a new emphasis on the *constructed nature of gender* (Jolly 2002). This marked a turning point in the articulation between development studies, studies of masculinities and postcolonialism. As we have already noted, the pro-feminist theorists of masculinity and especially the theory of hegemonic masculinities largely changed the focus from *essentialist to constructionist perspectives* in the studies of gender. We may then continue to note that this paradigmatic shift from WID to GAD has seen the emergence of postcolonial concerns in development studies. The entry point has been the argument that while GAD did depart from WID thinking, it largely remains within the framework of modernization, indicating that colonial continuities are still alive in GAD discourse (Arnfred 2004). Indeed, it has been established that development institutions and practitioners have been rather slow in taking biological determinist thinking about men into account (Greig *et al* 2000).

One of the areas where continuities are evident is the way patriarchy is viewed (Arnfred 2004, Becker 2004). As outlined for example by Judith Butler:

"The very notion of patriarchy has threatened to become a universalising concept that overrides or reduces distinct articulations of gender symmetry in different cultural contexts. As feminism has sought to become integrally related to struggle against racialistic and colonialist oppression, it has become increasingly important to resist the colonizing epistemological strategy that would subordinate different configurations of domination under the rubric of a transcultural notion of patriarchy" (Butler 1993, quoted in Arnfred 2004: 12).

Increasingly, in GAD discourse, the *victimizaion* of African women is questioned and criticized, but the overall framework of 'Othering' has by and large remained intact (Arnfred 2003). My study identifies with these sentiments.

Since the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, men and men and masculinities, have become an increasingly widely debated theme in GAD circles, as well as in the wider world of the media, where there has been extensive debates about 'men in crisis' (see e.g. Chant and Guttmann 2001, 2002, Cleaver 2002, 2000, Cornwall 2000, 2003, Greg *et al* 2000, Jackson 1999, 1997, Sweetman 2001, 2002 and White 1997, 2000 among others). One of the main concerns of these studies is the question as to how gender and masculinity impact on and are impacted by development. They have argued that men and gender relations are key issues in all efforts to reduce gender inequalities and that men should be seen not as some kind of problem, but rather as part of the solution, as allies and partners (Cleaver 2000).

In WID and GAD discourses men have largely generally been presumed to be powerful, and obstacles to equitable development, a view which points to overtones of colonial stereotypes about 'lazy natives' (White 1997). In gender policy documents, the superiority of women as hardworking, reliable, trustworthy, socially responsible, caring and co-operative is often asserted and contrasted with the frequently portrayal of men as lazy, violent, promiscuous and irresponsible drunkards (Cleaver 2000). Indeed, in GAD literature, "men appear very little, often as hazy background figures" (White 1997: 16) and rarely are they depicted as people - sons, lovers, husbands, fathers- with whom women might have shared interest and concerns, let alone love and cherish (Cornwall 2000).

Along this line, it is argued that although women continue to shoulder a disproportionate share of material and civil disadvantages, trends now show that a number of men are increasingly exposed to vulnerability and marginalization (Chant and Guttmann 2001, Cleaver 2002, Silberschmidt, 1999, 2001, 2004). The contention here is that the



‘demasculinising’ effects of poverty and of economic and social change could be eroding men’s ‘traditional roles’ as providers and limiting the availability of alternatives in the form of men’s roles in families and communities (Cleaver 2002). As a result, it is argued, men may seek affirmation of their masculinity in other ways such as irresponsible sexual behaviour or domestic violence. According to White (1997:20):

“Treating gender as solely women’s issue seriously underestimates the scale of the battle to achieve a more just society. Widening the gender perspective to include men and masculinities should broaden and deepen our understanding of power and inequality, not only between men and women, but also in other social relations, and thus increase the effectiveness of development interventions”.

Cleaver (2002) also points out that to better understand the situation of men and women in GAD, it is important to track and monitor temporal changes in gender relations, and in different cultural contexts and in relation to the respective programmes and policies. This is the main endeavour of my research.

## **2.6 Conclusions**

This chapter has aimed at building a theoretical foundation upon which the research is based by reviewing the relevant literature on development, postcolonialism and masculinity. I have argued that the interaction in both theory and practice between postcolonialism, masculinities and development, enables me to glean some valuable insights for my analysis. I have highlighted some continuity in development thinking while at the same time shown that this development thinking has kept changing through the re-working of its discourses and practices. I also argue that it is critical to understand and appreciate the shortcomings of development practice and policies. We have seen that the term “development” has for long been understood as an intentional process aimed at achieving ongoing linear progress: “the perspective remains linear, teleological, ethnocentric” (Pieterse 1991: 14) which is not always the case as we shall see.

Development theory is thus partly about the negotiation of what constitutes 'improvement' and what 'appropriate intentions' mean (Power 2003a: 72). A key thematic in these debates is the contestation and conflict around these 'rules' for improvement. Indeed, my analysis of the trends in development thinking has highlighted contradictions and paradoxes manifest in the gap between stated intentions of development and the actual results. We have seen that by understanding the terms and practices of development, we are in a position to locate the Maasai within these practices and discourses. In particular, I have argued for the need to understand the origins and meanings of development and to problematize the Eurocentric ideas on which it is largely based. For instance, it is now possible for my study to engage in a politics of representation and to create knowledge about the Maasai as human beings who are no lesser than others, as opposed to, for instance, colonial knowledge, which constructed them as primitive. We may then conclude that development is problematic and as such requires critical investigation.

The chapter has also shown that postcolonial thought is not only relevant to the study of development, gender and masculinity, but also that these studies themselves shed some light on postcolonialism. We have also seen that postcolonial theory is:

“Centrally concerned with the impact of colonialism and its contestation on the cultures of both the colonizing and the colonized in the past, and the reproduction and transformations of colonial relations, representations and practices in the present” (Gregory 2000, cited in Hubbard *et al* 2002: 81).

This theoretical perspective is at the heart of my analysis of the paradoxical and contradictory trends and claims in contemporary development practice and policies. We have seen the need to not only concern ourselves with discourse and textual analysis but also to ground postcolonial studies in the material circumstances of the researched. In any case, concerns with representation, text and imagery are still perceived as being too far removed from the concerns of the daily lives of millions of subaltern peoples (McEwan 2001). We may hereby also conclude that postcolonial perspectives, despite some pitfalls, provide a potential for a valuable critique of the discourses and practices of development.

Within pro-feminist perspectives and specifically the theory of hegemonic masculinities, I identify a useful framework for analysing gender relations and a critique of sex roles theory. Sex roles are criticized for being too static, thus not allowing for change, being normative, ahistorical and also ignoring issues of power in gender relations. The pro-feminist approaches on the other hand favour a more constructionist approach to gender. As such, we can appreciate the fact that gender is a set of behaviour and practices within the Maasai society. This critique helps us clarify the meanings and differences between sex and gender and thus provides space for the investigation of gender beyond biological essentialism in a Maasai context. In addition, sex role and other non-feminist approaches help understand pressures that masculinity “imposes on men and the cost it may have to them and others” (Greig *et al* 2000: 9). Given these observations, we can conclude that the theory of hegemonic masculinities is best suited for understanding the power dynamics in gender relations.

Finally, I conclude that combining postcolonial approaches and the insights from the theory of hegemonic masculinity can more comprehensively engage the political, economic and social context of development and their gendered implications. They can help us understand how development policies and practices have affected Maasai men’s identities and indeed, how both Maasai men and women negotiate their own agency. Most instructive for this research, Connell’s model provides a useful apparatus for analysing hybrid postcolonial subjectivities. They provide a framework of how gender identities among the Maasai have shifted over time. My argument here is that these theories and debates can help us usefully explore how development has impacted on Maasai masculinities. We are thus able to treat gender, within specific Maasai contexts, not as a given but as something actively constructed on an on-going basis through daily practice and discourses. Combining the two also allows us, in the words of Nurse (2004), to analyse the contemporary transitions in Maasai masculinity as part of the long-term large-scale transformations in modern the capitalist world-system.

## **Chapter Three: Research Methodology**

### **1. Introduction**

This chapter discusses the methods used to generate data and information useful to answering the research questions posed by the study in chapter one and provides the basis for evaluating the theoretical framework provided in chapter two. My interest in doing research on gender among the Maasai had earlier been motivated by my participation in a research project on poverty manifestation and coping strategies in Kajiado District in Kenya in 2001 (see Kibutu and Gaitho 2002). During the course of this research, I became aware that some aspects of poverty and the coping strategies the Maasai people employed had gendered dimensions.

This chapter starts by a discussion of the theoretical considerations where efforts are made to connect the theoretical framework presented in chapter two with the methodology. This is followed by presenting the preparations that were made before the commencement of the research and the considerations that were made in the process. This includes the choice of the research site, recruitment of the research assistants and considerations pertaining to language(s). Methods of data collection are then explained with most emphasis laid on qualitative approaches, which are the main methods used. Issues of ethics and positionality are then dealt with followed by an explanation of some of the problems encountered. Suffice to mention that qualitative methodologies were the main research approaches that were utilized to gather the bulk of the data for this study and were augmented with the collection of some basic quantitative data.

### **3.2 Theoretical considerations**

“Recognizing the voices of the subaltern should be a crucial methodological priority for the postcolonial writers” (Raghuram and Madge, in press: 4).

In line with postcolonial feminism, postcolonialism and the theory of hegemonic masculinities, my study on Maasai masculinities calls for a methodology that aims at the recovery of the marginalized voices of the subaltern through an engagement with the material and discursive legacies of colonialism. In this section, I therefore strive to come up with what may be referred to as a 'postcolonial methodology of studying masculinities'. Such a methodological approach should centralize the issue of the exercise of power. This is because as we have thus noted, postcolonialism raises some fundamental questions about 'power, representation and voice' (Bell 2002: 65). As postcolonial theorists such as Edward Said (1978: 5) argues;

“ideas, cultures and histories cannot seriously be studied without their force, or more precisely their configurations of power, also being studied”.

In the same vein, Raghuram and Madge (in press) argue for active engagements with power and power relations at various levels ranging from the inter-personal to wider global contexts. As such, our research methods should provide access to the motives, the aspirations and the power relations that determine ways in which places, people, events are made and represented (Johnston 2002). Indeed, postcolonialism challenges;

“Any practice that assumes descriptive and representational neutrality and adherence to a correspondence theory of language and truth” (Jack and Westwood in press: 14).

Such research methodology must then, of necessity, become involved in the politics of representation. In the words of Jack and Westwood (in press: 14-15);

“Beginning with the notion that research is an exercise in the *politics of representation*, the ontological and epistemological standpoints that characterize postcolonial theory can be articulated with reference to Orientalism. A central postcolonial position is that the epistemological practices located in Orientalism form part of an *exercise of power* by which an active Western subject knows and masters a passive non-Western subject. It exposes the relations of power inherent in such systems of representation, masked through the presumed innocence and neutrality of scholarship and scientific research”.

Such methodological approaches should therefore also take cognisance of, and question the role that colonial discourses, practices and relations have played in the dynamic of power and thus gender relations and identities. In Homi Bhabha's (1994) terms, our postcolonial methodologies of masculinities should pay attention to the mutually constitutive identities of

the colonizer and the colonized by paying attention to resistance, ambivalence, mimicry and hybridity. In the same vein, we should be aware and indeed question the way mainstream development discourses and practices are implicated in the unequal power relations between and among men and women. As such, our analysis of the development and gender literature should be carried out with a critical perspective to unearth the silences and point out the misrepresentations in knowledge produced along these lines of thinking. The contention here is that such an approach will ultimately provide us with a decolonised perspective of Maasai gender relations and the dynamics of Maasai masculine identities.

Such methodologies also call for a serious and critical consideration of ethical issues in the research process. Similarly the researcher's positionality should be made explicit and given due consideration in the whole research process. My reflections on positionality are influenced by the writings within postcolonialism and the theory of hegemonic masculinity especially the attention they give to issue of human power relations. One of the most important concerns of postcolonial perspectives and qualitative methodologies is their shared goal of recovering the marginalized voices of the subaltern. These insights should inform our methodology and indeed, the whole research process. It is done in the spirit of the view by Raghuram and Madge (in press: 29) that a postcolonial method;

“must be adapted to the specificities of social, political, historical and material locations of the researcher and the people with whom they are working”.

Let us now focus on how data for this research was gathered.

### **3.3 Data gathering: Sources of data and methods of data collection**

#### ***3.3.1 Preparatory phase***

This thesis is based on a field study conducted in Kenya for seven months between 2003 and 2004. As is the standard requirement in Kenya, before commencing the research, I obtained a

research permit from the Ministry of Education. I then embarked on identifying the appropriate field site (village). The regulations pertaining to research in Kenya are such that one has to report to the local administrator under whose jurisdiction his/her area of research lies. Thus I reported to the District Officer (DO) in charge of Ngong Administrative Division in Ngong town. In my discussion with the DO, I obtained some insights that made me move closer to identifying an appropriate research site. Soon after, I went to Kajiado District Headquarters in Kajiado Town (Ngong Division is in Kajiado District) and held discussions with officers involved with planning in the district. Here, I got some valuable information and maps which finally made me settle on one village namely Kisaju which suited my research well. Kisaju village is in South Keekonyokie Location of Ngong Division, Kajiado District (see A in Figure 1). The village covers an area of 185.3sq km and has a population density of 14 persons per square kilometre. Its total population is 2,685 persons, with 1,312 males and 1,365 females and a total of 474 households (Kenya 2002).

The reasons why I picked on this particular village are that; one, its inhabitants are virtually all Maasai (the subjects of my research) and two; its proximity to urbanization (Ngong administrative division neighbours the capital city of Nairobi), making it suitable for a case study of the impact of development on the Maasai people. In addition, it is within Ngong administrative division that the neo-liberal policies that led to the conversion of formerly communally owned land to private ownership were first implemented in Maasailand. This change in land tenure was instituted in the name of development and has had far reaching impacts on the livelihoods and lifestyles of the Maasai, as is shown later in this thesis. This makes the village an ideal place to investigate the impact of development on gender identities. The village is also relatively accessible by road and this made it logistically suitable and convenient for my research.

In the course of my later discussions with some of my informants in Kisaju, there were frequent references to some Maasai people who had left the village and gone to 'some place' in Nairobi in search of 'greener pastures'. I made a follow-up of this and ended up tracing a village that the residents call Naserian (meaning 'home' in Maa language), in the outskirts of Nairobi, the capital city of the country, and about sixty kilometres from Kisaju (see B in figure 1). It is a slum-like, ten-year-old, squatter settlement of sixty Maasai households most of who have migrated from Kisaju and who are squatting on public land together with their livestock (about 700 heads of cattle and 1500 sheep and goats by January 2004). The majority of the men here are employed as either *askari-wa-usiku* (night watchmen) in the nearby middle-class residential estates and business premises or as *ocekut* (herdsmen) or, in some instances, both. The majority of women on the other hand are engaged in the businesses of beadwork and milk. I later conducted some qualitative interviews with twenty informants, both men and women. The aim was to make a follow-up on how they were fairing as migrants in a suburban environment and how this impacted on identities. The two villages are seen as representing some sort of a development continuum from rural through to urban. Throughout the research period, I lived in the nearby town of Ongata Rongai and would drive to and from the research sites.

I managed to hire two resourceful Maasai men as Research Assistants (RAs) for the quantitative survey, which was the first phase of the research. Both of them were high school educated and could write and fluently express themselves in Maa (the language of the Maasai people), Swahili, and English. The two RAs were quite conversant with the research area and its people. I trained them on what was expected followed by a pre-testing (pilot) of the questionnaire after which I made some adjustments. The main reason for picking on Maasai enumerators was to facilitate better communication in terms of language, local sensitivities and easier identification of households. However, most of my time in the field was spent in



the second phase where qualitative data was gathered. This was done with my main research assistant.

In terms of language, the majority of the Maasai are conversant with the Swahili language. I am fluent in Swahili and just slightly acquainted with Maa. Interviews were conducted in the respondents' language of choice. Often, this was a mixture of Swahili and Maa languages. Let us now focus on how data was specifically gathered.

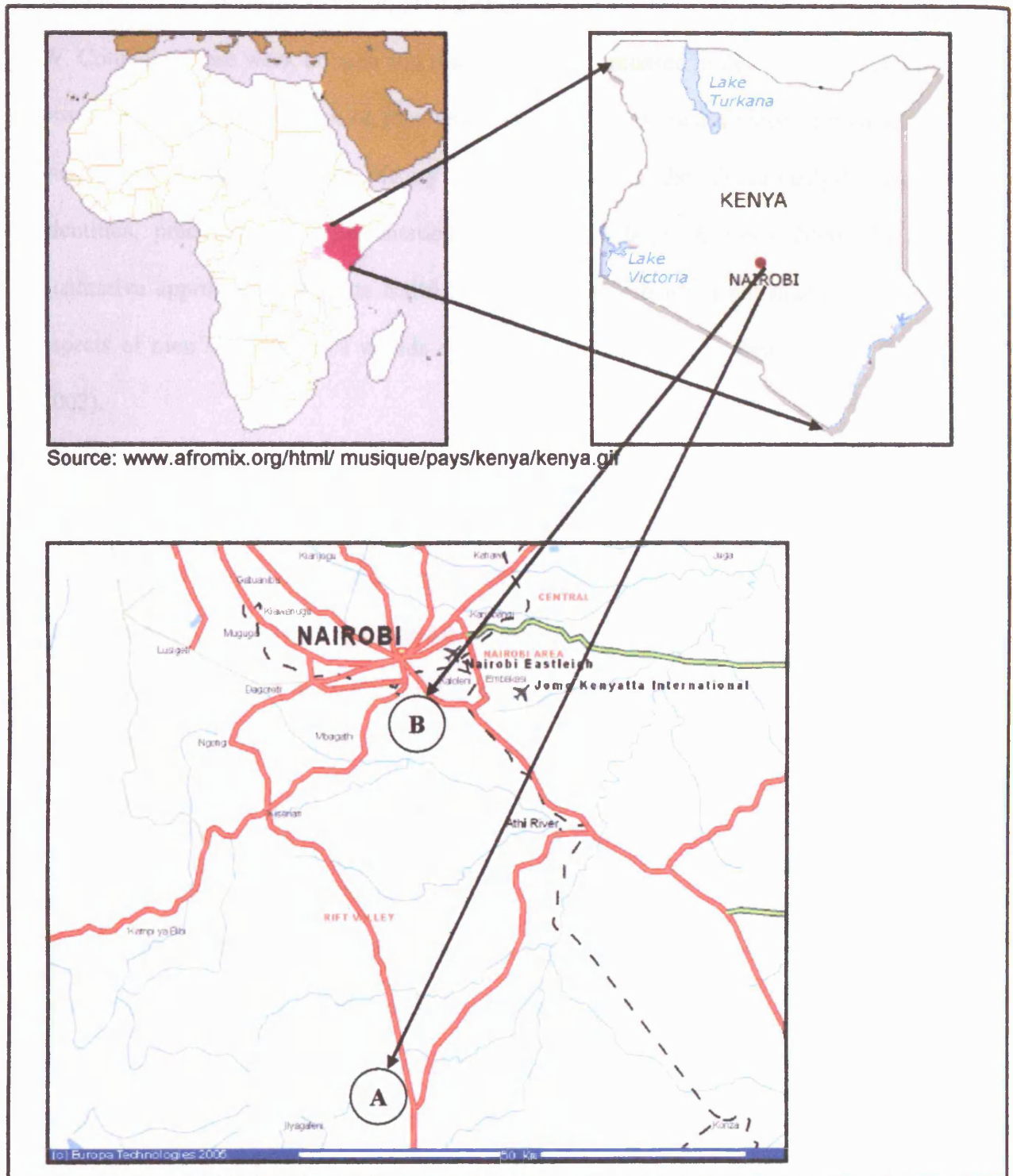


Figure 1: Study sites of Kisaju (A) and Naserian (B) Source: Adopted from [www.multimap.com/map](http://www.multimap.com/map).

### 3.3.2 Data collection: qualitative methods

Qualitative research may involve personal life histories, in-depth open-ended interviews with groups or individuals, participant observation, and interpretation of a variety of texts including visual images (Johnston *et al* 2002, Lamb and Dwyer 2001, Madge *et al* 1997). R. W. Connell, whose work on men and masculinities is discussed in detail in Chapter Two, also observed that recent research on men and masculinities has used a range of methods such as quantitative surveys and life history studies to explore the situationally-formed gender identities, practices and representations of men and boys (Connell 2000). In addition, qualitative approaches are quite fruitful in gender research when not much is known about aspects of men's or women's worlds as this gives us more richly detailed data (Rosenfield 2002).

Literature also indicates that the philosophical starting point for researchers using qualitative methodologies is that knowledge is situated and partial. Such view of knowledge is based on the perception of the social world as something that is not fixed or readily known but that is made up of competing social constructions, representations and performances (Limb and Dwyer 2001). Qualitative methodologies thus regard the social world as:

“Something dynamic and changing and always in the process of becoming – of being constructed through a web of cultural political and economic relationships...emphasis is on the importance of understanding lived experiences and reflecting on the meanings associated with everyday life” (Johnston 2002: 660-661).

Smith (2001) further argues that these multiple constructions and representations suggest that knowledge is both situated and struggled over. This is in line with the view that a postcolonial approach pursues a subjectivist view of ontology (Jack and Westwood, in press: 21). It also reflects the aims of postcolonialism which, as we have seen, include the struggle over knowledge through its engagement in the politics of representation. As we also saw in Chapter Two, the struggle over knowledge is also pertinent in the theory of hegemonic masculinities.

It has also been argued that by using qualitative methods, we are applying a strategy that recognises and addresses the diversity and complexities of human experiences. In the same vein, “a postcolonial approach argues for not only the radical reconstruction of histories and knowledge production, but also demands attention to a diversity of perspectives and priorities” (McEwan 2002: 128, cited in Raghuram and Madge in press: 4). By so doing, Smith (2001) for instance argues, we are then adopting a strategy that aims to place non-dominant neglected knowledges at the heart of the research. By the same token, Limb and Dwyer (2001: 9) have it that: “many qualitative researchers’ aim is to ‘recover and centralize marginalized voices’”. It is also argued that the role of seeing the world from the respondent’s or the actor’s point of view is a commitment of qualitative research and in this way the researcher does not occupy a privileged position with respect to the researched (Jack and Westwood, in press). As we have thus noted, this is also a central concern in postcolonial approaches, which this study adopts. Along the same line, Smith (2001: 25-26) also observes that,

“since qualitative research strategies bear the political goals of unsettling the status quo and redefining what relevant, useful, and legitimate knowledge is, it is not surprising that the strategies are closely associated with the development of postcolonial, feminist and anti-racist knowledges”.

Let us focus our attention more specifically on the in-depth open-ended interviews and participant observation.

### 3.3.2.1 In-depth open-ended interviews and participant observation

In-depth open-ended interviews and participant observation were conducted in the study sites (Kisaju and Naserian) among men and women of different ages and social and economic statuses. Some key resource persons were identified such as the District Officer (DO), the Kisaju village chief and sub-chief, the research officer with the NGO, Maasai Aids Awareness Program (MAAP) and other prominent persons in the area such as teachers. It is

also argued that in-depth interviews can be fruitful in obtaining an account of the interviewees' experiences of perceptions of their own world and the meanings that they ascribe to it (Valentine 2001). The interview format used was a kind of a checklist of topics to be covered with the respondents who were thus encouraged to talk along certain avenues. As Johnston *et al* (2002: 660) argue:

“The aim is not to collate typical responses to pre-defined questions from a random sample, or to generalize about the views of a population, but rather to record in complex details the opinions and ideas of a relatively small number of individuals or groups”.

A total of 85 people comprising 61 men and 24 women were interviewed (either in their homesteads or elsewhere) individually and also as informal groups. The discussions focused on their experiences with, and views on, *maendeleo* (development) and its impacts. Topics covered in the informal discussions included the nature of the participants' work and aspects of job satisfaction, opinions about the construction of 'ideal', 'rich', and 'bad' men, the taking up of domestic chores by men, domestic violence, positive and negative impacts of development, problems faced by men, and how men and women are coping with poverty. Information pertaining to issues of religion, land, marriages, education, agriculture, drug abuses, migration, gender roles and relations, ceremonies such as circumcision and *orng'esherr* (ceremony which marks the rite of passage of men from circumcised younger men or *moran*, to junior elders) was also sought. Such discussions helped clarify issues and complexities of the dynamics of gender relations and masculine identities in the context of 'development'. In general, efforts were made to locate the individual actions and beliefs of these men and women within their wider contextual framework. This reflects Cleaver's (2002) suggestion that in studies of the crisis of masculinity, it could be useful to locate the individual actions and beliefs of both men and women within the wider framework of social, economic and political change. More specifically, these methods were intended to elicit images of development, power, gender and masculinity (and the crisis thereof), and determine the degree of similarity or variance in peoples' ideas and experiences. Responses from

informants were recorded on paper and later discussed with the research assistant to clarify issues of translation and meaning.

The interviews were often contextual and adapted to the convenience of the informants and were thus carried out in their homes, workplaces, market, roads and so on. There were times when I also felt that the best place to meet the respondents was in beer drinking places, in the local village pub at Oloitikosh shopping centre or the nearby town of Isinya which to a large extent was the home town of Kisaju residents. Of course not all men drank alcohol and some would go to the bar to socialise and probably take some soft drinks or tea. We would go early before the potential informants had had one too many to facilitate meaningful discussions.

During the research period, an *orng'esherr* ceremony, mentioned earlier, was held in Kisaju village and through observations, discussions and interviews with some of the participants I was able to gather some valuable information pertaining to my research. The details and implications of this ceremony to my study are presented in Chapter Eight of the thesis.

I was also able to attend and participate in a seminar organized by a MAAP affiliate youth group known as *Youths in Crossfire* held on the 30<sup>th</sup> of December 2003 at Nado-Enterit Primary School in Kisaju Village. The seminar organisers aimed at providing a forum for discussing HIV/AIDS, the nature and causes of the apparent increase in drug abuse, sexuality and susceptibility to HIV/AIDS infection, poverty and culture. My attendance provided me with some insight into the gendered aspects of the issues raised. More than one hundred people who ranged from young adolescents to a few elderly people attended the seminar.

As an approach to qualitative data gathering, participant observation was also used. This is a method that involves living and/or working within particular communities in order to understand people's experiences in the context of their everyday lives (Cook 2005, Valentine

2001). The researcher makes notes about events, activities and behaviour of, and relationships between community members (Cook 1997, Valentine 2001). Thus in many instances I, together with my main research assistant joined the informants in their daily chores such as herding and business to avoid taking them out of their activities. There was also observation and questioning about such events as the moving of cattle by the *emborokuai* (cattle trekkers), livestock trading, bead making, milking, selling of milk, use of alcohol, smoking and so on. This was convenient although at times it required some perseverance, for instance being in the scorching sun for hours and walking long distances. Many times I also gave lifts in my car to people in the village whom I met along the way. Often, this initiated some rapport with them and useful contacts were made and information solicited. All in all, participant observation made me more acceptable to the respondents by helping to build trust.

### 3.3.2.2 Data collection: Secondary Sources

Secondary data means information that has been collected by someone else and may provide researchers with “many opportunities for original analysis or interpretation of such data” (Clark 2005: 57). It can tell us about the past and provide a context for primary data (*ibid*). Before the early 1990s, geographers did not pay keen interest to the analysis of text due to what Aitken (2005: 236) calls “misguided emphases on the physical conditions of social life”. Since then however, Aitken (2005) continues to observe, the place of literature has become central in the understanding of lived experiences in the production and consumption of power and cultural differences. In line with this, I accessed some secondary data and information on the history of the settlement of the Maasai people, their pre-colonial gender relations, their historical experience with development, and changing gender relations and related effects on masculinity from various sources. I collected such data and information from various libraries such as libraries of the Institutes of African Studies and Development Studies of the University of Nairobi, the Catholic University Library, Kajiado District Planning Department

Library, and the library at The Kenya Wildlife Services Headquarters. I also gathered information on the relevant Kenya Government policies, laws, and regulations with a view to creating a deeper understanding of the background against which the Maasai masculinities were being constructed.

In addition, throughout my research, I kept myself abreast of issues relating to my research in the local media, such as information on such diverse issues as education, land sales and grievances, human-wildlife conflict, marriages, ceremonies and so on. I got this information mainly from the print media, especially newspapers, some of which were also accessible via the Internet from the UK. This information has been integrated in the discussions of research findings. Lastly, I also took some photos that I deemed suitable for my research.

### *3.3.3 Data collection: Quantitative methods*

Quantitative data was collected using a brief questionnaire (a short household survey) to solicit basic socio-economic information about the household heads. Pre-testing was done to test various questionnaire items for readability, comprehension, order effect, and response variation. I was finally able to successfully administer some 200 questionnaires in Kisaju village. The questionnaire contained questions on age, marital status, sex, religious affiliation, educational achievement, size of land holding and so on. In addition, some data on gender roles and relations pertaining to land were gathered.

The absence of complete and up-to-date sampling frames prevents systematic scientific sampling of the population. Ideally, the primary sampling units (in this case households) should be randomly selected. However, a scientifically designated random sample assumes the existence of a complete and correct sampling frame. Such frames are not available in Kenya. Therefore, once the study area was identified (i.e. Kisaju Village), 200 questionnaires were administered (Coast 2000 also successfully used the same method). The figure of 200



was deemed adequate given the temporal and logistic constraints I was facing. A national sampling frame is unavailable from the Kenya Bureau of Statistics and the lists from the registers of the previous group ranches are obsolete and the highly political nature of access to group ranch land records makes the construction of a more up-to-date list extremely difficult (Coast 2002: 82). Efforts were however made to cover all corners of Kisaju village, and this was made possible by the detailed local knowledge of the research assistants.

The Standard United Nations definition of a household as “one or more persons who make common provision for food and other provisions of living” (United Nations 1980) has been found to be inappropriate in the Maasai context (Coast 2000: 73). This is because, if the provision of food is considered, a complex web of food-sharing practices has been revealed. For example, a married man can expect to be provided with milk by his wife (or wives) upon request. In a polygamous marriage each wife prepares and cooks food for consumption by herself and any dependants. Except in special circumstances such as sickness or preparation for a ceremony, co-wives do not make common provision for cooking. The closest approximation is that of the *olmarei* or family, which refers to a married man, his wife (wives), dependent children and other relatives who are dependant. *Olmarei* was thus viewed as the household and used as the unit for enumeration.

### **3.4 Analytical methods**

#### ***3.4.1 Qualitative data analysis***

The data from qualitative sources were transcribed for detailed analysis and comparison to develop a thematic account of the dynamics of gender and masculine identities and the factors therein. As notes Crang (2005: 223);

“There are no hard and fast rules over the precise mechanics people adopt...it tends to be what they are most comfortable with or what fits their materials best”.

Generally however, qualitative analysis seeks to make sense out of data produced by means of categorisation and drawing connections (Kitchin and Tate 2000). Typically, most researchers commence their analysis by going back over all the notes and jottings and through a close reading formalize them into similar 'categories' or 'codes' (Crang 2001, 2005, Kitchin and Tate 2000). Codes are 'the abbreviations or acronyms put on similar segments' (Crang 2005: 223). Coding is intended to make analysis more systematic and to build up an interpretation through a series of stages, which helps avoid the temptation to make our conclusions prematurely (Jackson 2001).

Bearing this in mind, I started my analysis by carefully combing through the data and identifying the factors and issues I deemed important or more salient to my research questions. I read each interview in turn before reading across the transcripts, focusing on how similar and dissimilar pieces of data were thus establishing connections, divergences and contradictions in the responses. By severally re-reading the transcripts, I was able to draw out a set of recurring themes, events and topics. These themes were explored further and discussed in the context of wider debates of the thesis. Often, I have thus used quotes from the informants in an effort to capture the various shades of opinions and practices that help create a better understanding of Maasai masculine identities.

Attention was also given to the silences, absences and exclusions in the interviews. Jackson (2001) emphasises that the interpretation of qualitative material should also pay as much attention to these as to the manifest content of what is actually said. In the context of this thesis, several commentators have noted that such silences are characteristic of more hegemonic forms of masculinity (see Connell 1995, Jackson 2001).

In addition, data from documentary sources were analysed and integrated in the discussions in the thesis. Such materials were interpreted from postcolonial theoretical perspectives in what

Aitken (2005: 234) refers to as 'use of theory as method'. Johnston *et al* (2002) have discussed the need for a critical analysis of documentary data and is worth quoting at length:

“When interpreted critically, literature can expose the forces shaping received wisdom or shared common sense about the ordering of society and space – a common sense which powerful groups have an interest in manipulating....ways of writing and speaking are culturally coded and contain certain important clues to political and economic circumstances of the societies that produce them...recognizing that textual representations create rather than reflect the world of experience” (pp. 661).

Such analysis should therefore focus our aims upon theorising the workings of power and it is in this sense that Aitken (2005: 234) observes that texts are political and should be engaged with in an effort to effect change through for instance the elaboration of new meanings and representing resistance to narratives that are dominant. Bearing these issues in mind, I analysed the various materials from secondary sources and connected this analysis with the wider concerns of the thesis. Issues of ethics and the related concept of positionality in research are also important and merit some discussion.

#### *3.4.2 Quantitative data analysis*

Data from the structured questionnaires was analysed quantitatively by use of the SPSS computer software and results were generated in the form of descriptive statistics. Thus for instance the proportion of heads of households with various educational attainments such as primary school level, high school level and so on was determined. Similarly, the percentage of the household heads that belonged to various religious affiliations were also determined, among others and subsequently discussed. Essentially, this provides some background to the socio-economic character of the village and individual respondents upon which my subsequent analysis based on the qualitative materials collected has been done.

### **3.5 Ethical issues**

In this section, I start by outlining what ethical issues and positionality are in research. I then show how I endeavoured to conform to the requirements of ethical research and positionality.

In the recent past, emphasis has been laid on ethical considerations in the conduct of

geographical research. This has created the demand for reflexivity which results in a conscious analytical scrutiny of the researcher's self (Cloke *et al* 2004, Jackson 2001). Some authors have provided general guidelines as to what is to be considered ethical research practice by advocating a professional approach to research. Madge (1994: 92) for instance argues that;

“Ethical research is considered as one that ‘does not harm’ and which gains informed consent from, and respects the rights of individuals being studied”.

Along the same lines, others focus upon issues such as privacy, confidentiality, sensitivity to cultural difference and gender and anonymity (Cloke *et al* 2004, Hammersly and Atkinson 1995, Kitchin and Tate 2000). In this respect, Valentine (2001) for instance opines that when we approach informants, it is important that we offer the option of opting into your research instead of making our request in a manner that implies or assumes that we expect a positive response or puts them into the uncomfortable position of having to refuse us.

Another determinant of ethical research is *positionality* or the requirement that we examine how we are ourselves positioned in relation to various contexts of power. As Ley and Mountz (2001: 235) put it:

“We are all caught up in a web of contexts - class, age, nationality, intellectual tradition and others that shape our capacity to tell the story of others”.

As such, the recognition of a researcher's positionality and need for critical reflexive engagement with the research process at all stages is crucial since this raises complex issues pertaining to the position from which the researcher speaks and about silencing or giving voice to the researched (Butler 2001, Johnston *et al* 2002, Smith 2001). This is in line with the epistemological position of postcolonialism, which emphasises that knowledge is produced within certain economic, political and social circumstances, which inevitably shape it in some ways (Butler 2001, Rose 1997). My reflections on positionality are thus influenced by the writings within postcolonial approaches especially its emphasis on power and issues of

representation as an important facet in human relations. Jack and Westwood (in press: 23-4) aptly capture this issue:

“Postcolonialism raises important questions about the cultural, ideological and political position of the researcher and the knowledge systems they rely upon, their warrant to presume to scrutinise, appropriate and represent the researched, and the consequences that may derive from any research practice. Particular attention is to be paid to the ethical consequences of research practice in terms of its portrayal of the ‘Other’. Avoidance of essentialisms, exoticisms and universalisms is paramount”.

In addition, such politics of position requires that we pay attention not only to the structures of power that privilege certain voices while silencing others, but also to issues of representation (Johnson *et al* (2002). Indeed, many researchers feel that it is important;

“to share details about power relations between the researched and the researcher, not simply the position of the researched individuals in isolation” (Butler 2001: 271).

In the same vein a postcolonial narrative of identity formation has been used to create a new politics of representation that views subjects as not only fractured but also mutually engaged in the construction of identities (McEwan 2001). These are crucial considerations in the whole research process. As such, it is vital that we represent the varied views of the respondents in recognition of the need to situate our discourses within the many and often contradictory fields of power (Butler 2001, Cloke 2004). Indeed, one of the most important ways in which qualitative research can do this is through offering space for the voices of the respondents to be heard by, “use of direct quotes from participants in written reports” (Butler 2001: 267).

As per the requirements of ethical research, in all instances I started interviews by introducing myself or being introduced by my research assistant. Many wanted to know my purpose and I always made it clear that it was academic. I mentioned my institutional affiliations and explained to the informants the source of funding for the research. I explained that my research may provide data for future projects in the community but cannot guarantee any material outcome. I also always carried a copy of my research permit in case I was required to reassure and reinforce the above information. In addition, assurance on confidentiality was also given in all instances, and I also assured interviewees that they would remain anonymous. As Rastback (2003) has pointed out, the standard procedure in the research

process is to make informants anonymous by giving them aliases. Informants in my qualitative research have been given codes which indicate whether they are male or female. Males are given the code RM (Respondent Male) and females RF (Respondent Female). For chief resource persons, CRM and CRF were used for men and women respectively. In addition, each respondent is given a number that corresponds to her/his position in order of when he/she was interviewed. For example, if a man was the first to be interviewed, he is identified as RM 01. Likewise, if the twentieth respondent was female, she is identified as RF 20. In the discussions, efforts are also made to identify the age-grade of the respondents such as *moran*, elder, senior elder (woman or man), or other social status such as teacher, trader, *emborokuai* (cattle trekker) and so on where this is used to emphasise a specific point. This is done in the spirit of recognising the, “broader context within which a quote was made” (Butler 2001: 270). In addition, all the names given in the subsequent chapters are not the real names of the informants. In instances where I thought I might use for instance their photographs, I sought permission in advance. To avoid creating some false expectations from the respondents for instance, I made it clear from the outset that I was a research student with no access to resources for their benefit. Interviews were recorded in writing and with prior knowledge of the informants.

During the pilot study, I also noted that some informants were keen to know what we had recorded. This prompted us to read out what we had taken down and we made it a habit to do the same for most of the field research period. Incidentally, many people, both men and women were quite enthusiastic to discuss issues of masculinity and men’s problems and were visibly concerned about such issues as alcohol abuse, the sale of land, joblessness, HIV/AIDS, domestic violence and so on. I also used some social skills about the Maasai culture such as the different modes of greetings for people of various ages and sex to gain acceptance in the community. Indeed, our familiarity (me and my research assistants) with the Maasai customary behaviour (greetings, courtesy based on age, sex, and other attributes)

proved to be quite valuable. By considering local sensitivities, the researcher was fulfilling the requirements of being ethical in research. As I have also mentioned earlier, on numerous occasions, I gave lifts to people from Kisaju village on their way to or out of the village. This is a common practice for those who have vehicles in the village. Now and then we would accompany them as they went ahead with their daily chores such as herding and watering of livestock. This way I was able to build trust among my respondents.

It has also been argued that “a postcolonial method...involves thinking about why we are doing research...in the first place” (Raghuram and Madge (in press: 11). Along this thinking, and as per such requirements of positionality, it may suffice to mention that I am a Kenyan male who is aware of and concerned with the plight of the majority of my fellow Kenyans, not least the Maasai, who are living in conditions of depravation and that my choice of the study area and subjects was much influenced by these concerns. It was possible that some of the respondents could view me as an outsider by virtue of my relatively higher formal education. I however hoped that my hiring of Maasai research assistant(s) and my prior knowledge of the area minimized the potential gap with the respondents. From the beginning of the research, I also avoided any covert observation as part of my responsibility to the respondents. I was also sympathetic to my informants especially those who were in some sort of distress or other. I also told them of my intention to publish the research findings.

### **3.6 Problems of data collection**

There were a few occasions however when some respondents initially appeared uncomfortable and suspicious of the aims of the research. However, after clearly explaining the purpose of the research, I received much cooperation. In addition, my research assistants were respected in the area especially because they were doing some voluntary work in the community and this helped a lot. For some of the elderly respondents, interviews were mainly

conducted in Maa language. The drawback here was that as the principal researcher, I could not directly understand the interviews conducted in Maa though I could follow the process as the research assistants did interpret to English and/or Swahili. It was also not always easy to translate experiences into English, thus in a few instances, informants' comments were paraphrased rather than using direct quotation. In a few instances also, some sections of the roads in Kisaju Village proved impassable by car and this would force us to walk for relatively long distances.

### **3.7 Conclusion**

The aim of this chapter has been to explain how data and information used in this thesis was obtained and analysed. We have noted that interest in this research had been developed during previous research encounters with the Maasai people of Kajiado District. The preparations for the research entailed obtaining a research permit and liaising with people working in the study area. Subsequently a research site, Kisaju Village, was identified as it suited the goals of the research well. My encounter with the respondents in Kisaju also sign-posted me to an informal settlement in Nairobi for Maasai people which I also found suitable for gathering part of the qualitative data. I was also able to hire research assistants who were well suited to the task.

In a way, postcolonial methodological approaches to masculinity parallel developments within feminist methodology. The bulk of the field data was obtained from the use of qualitative approaches. We have seen that some of the concerns of qualitative approaches also mirror those of postcolonial perspectives. This provides a good fit between the theoretical framework and the methodology, especially the concern with the exercise of power and the recovery of marginalized voices. We have also seen the need for a thorough and systematic analysis of qualitative data to avoid making hasty conclusions. This allows key themes to emerge from the data and aids in the interpretation of the gendered identities of the Maasai.



Other than the in-depth interviews, participant observation was also used to gather qualitative data. This was also supplemented with data from published sources such as journal articles, books, the media and photographs.

The needs for ethical considerations and positionality in research have also been emphasised. Being ethical is generally aimed at ensuring that the research subjects are treated with respect and are not subjected to any harm. I have given a range of steps that I have taken to ensure that my research complies with ethical requirements. The issue of positionality on the other hand demands that we make our position in relation to the researched quite clear. I have also shown that postcolonial perspectives have largely informed my positionality, especially their concerns with power and representation. In this way then, we can conclude that research should be seen as an exercise in the politics of representation. Some of the problems encountered in the process of data gathering have also been highlighted to give a more balanced picture. In conclusion, the methodology used in this research strives to provide answers to the research questions posed in chapter one within the theoretical framework presented in chapter two. This has enabled me to make a coherent analysis of the data in relation to my initial concerns about the relationship between development and Maasai masculinities.

## **Chapter Four: ‘Patriarchal or relational’? Gender organization of the Maasai on the eve of the colonial encounter**

### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter provides the research context through a discussion of the gender organization of the Maasai at the time colonialism commenced towards the end of the nineteenth century. The chapter also allows us a glimpse of the nature of Maasai masculinities at the time. I do take cognizance of the fact that like other societies, Maasai society was not unchanging before the colonial period or at any point for that matter. Rather the purpose is to present a general picture of how gender relations were at the time of colonization and thus to provide some benchmark against which we can analyse the changes that have occurred since. Indeed, the historical background and linkages of the Maasai with other groups have been well documented and supported. Spear and Waller (1993), and Muriuki (1974) for instance indicate that even in pre-colonial times, the Maasai interaction with other communities resulted in mutual influencing of both groups. This is in line with Dorothy Hodgson’s claim (1999, 2001) that to understand the changes in Maasai gender relations during the colonial period, it is vital that we examine gender relations on the eve of the colonial encounter. Although her study was based among the Maasai of Tanzania, who were initially under German and later British colonialism, my contention is that this approach is appropriate for the analysis in my study. From a postcolonial feminist perspective, Hodgson’s work provides the best analysis of pre-colonial gender relations so far and this chapter borrows heavily from her work. It is also supplemented by other works that mirror Hodgson’s work including that of Ernestina Coast (2000), Naomi Kipuri (1989) and Aud Talle (1988) and my own critical review of earlier writings (such as Hollis 1904, Eliot 1904, Merker 1910, Thomson 1885, Muriuki 1974 and Kenyatta 1971).

Drawing from postcolonial feminist approaches I argue in this chapter that gender relations were not 'equitable', and indeed, men as a category may in some instances have yielded more power, including the power to 'discipline' women through the use of force. I however argue that gender relations were not patriarchal as understood in the western terms as a system in which men have all the power and importance in a society or group (Hodson 2001, Sinclair 2001). Indeed, and following the footsteps of postcolonial African feminists, such as Amadiume (1987) and Oyewumi (1997), I am sceptical about analysis that mostly stresses the "adversarial nature of gender relations" (Morrell and Swart 2004: 98). As such I attempt to show that to a large extent, both women's and men's interactions and responsibilities were complementary, overlapping, fluid, and interdependent. I also argue that gender relations, and by extension, masculine identities were relational and mediated by such other socio-economic categories as age (age-sets and age-grades), wealth, oratory and leadership abilities, among others. In this chapter I first argue that age and gender were the key axes of social organization that distinguished categories of persons and structured the roles, rights and responsibilities of Maasai males and females. For the men, age-grades and age-sets were the most basic structures around which gender roles and relations were organised.

I focus more on the age and gender specific interactions which sprang from this system rather than giving a detailed description of the formal structure of age-set graduation and promotion and associated ceremonies. For women, although they were not formally divided by age grades, their progression from young girls (*intonyie*) to old grandmothers (*koko*) was marked linguistically and often ritually (Hodgson 2001). Besides the age-grade and age-set system, other related factors that were important to gender include the production system and wealth status, political and religious factors. Indeed, both men and women garnered more or less prestige according to their homestead's wealth in stock, number of children and overall reputation for successful management of their affairs (Hodgson 2001, Hollis 1904). Livestock and by extension, land, had vital roles to play in the formation of Maasai masculine identities

around this period. To better appreciate the Maasai gender organization in this period, we first present a brief history of the territorial organization of the Maasai.

## **4.2 The migration history and social organization of Maasai people**

### **4.2.1 Migration history**

The history of Maasai migration and expansion to the time they were colonized is too long and complex to recount here in detail. Suffice to say that the history of the Maasai in the study area is part of the general history of the Maasai who now live in both Kenya and Tanzania. The oral traditions, archaeological and linguistic evidence places their origin in what is now Southern Sudan and the adjacent areas of Ethiopia (Adamson 1967, Sutton 1998, Wanjala and Wandibba 1987). They are said to have migrated to East Africa during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries because of the population and other pressures building up in the area (Rutten 1992). The early history of the Maasai migration into the Rift Valley would appear to be one of accommodation and adaptation, with successful groups establishing themselves beside, and intermixing with existing populations (Spear and Waller 1993). The colonial period commenced through the carving of East Africa in the early 1880s between the British and the German colonialists which subsequently split the then Maasailand into two different political entities (Asiema and Situma 1994). Those in Kenya came under British control in what was to become the East African Protectorate, whereas those in Tanganyika came under German control in what was then German East Africa (*ibid*).

## **4.3 The gender organization of the Maasai on the eve of the colonial encounter**

The relationships between and within male and females among the Maasai were mainly based on their age and gender organization. They had a general division of responsibilities, roles and labour between age-groups and sexes (Coast 2000) and socially organized themselves in

highly elaborate structures of age-sets with their attendant values (Spencer 1993). Each category of person was visibly marked by distinct clothing, hairstyles and ornamentation, and linguistically differentiated in greetings and various other classifications (Hodgson 1999). For men, differences in age were marked formally by designated *ilajjik* or age-grades. It is necessary to distinguish between age-grades and age-sets. Age-grades were the successful statuses to which individuals were ascribed in the course of their lives (Spencer 1993). On the other hand, age-sets comprise all those within a broad range of ages who are formed into a group of peers, with their own separate identity. Spencer (1993) further explains that all Maasai men belonged to an age-set following their initiation, and with their peers they pass as a body from one age grade to the next. Women did not belong to age sets, but at marriage they were in effect promoted to a higher age grade (*ibid*).

Although women were not formally divided by age-grades, their progression from young girls (*intonyie*) to old grand mothers (*koko*) was marked linguistically and often ritually (Hodgson 1999, 2001). Indeed, while many studies explicitly affirm male authority, they also stress the degree to which men also depended on women. Spencer (1993) for instance points out that sons depended on their mothers to be initiated into *maasaihood* and received their first cattle from them. Generally, the overriding principle of interaction between and among men and women varied by their age, kinship, clan and age set affiliations, but they were generally based on mutual respect (*enkanyit*) and relative autonomy (Sifuna 1986). The notion of *enkanyit* can be translated as ‘respect’, ‘obedience’ or ‘deference’ to structural superiors (Coast 2000, Llewelyn-Davis 1981). Spencer (1998) for instance points out that elder and elderhood conveyed a sense of status and respect. There is no space here to go into the details of the individual ceremonies and for our purposes I will discuss issues pertaining to gender and Maasai masculinities that I deem fitting to this thesis. Below, I describe the main life stages of the Maasai society and limit my discussion to an overview of the major phases. Other studies have devoted to detailed analysis of these aspects (e.g. Jacobs 1965, Spencer

1988, Spear and Waller 1993, Standa and Alila 1986, Talle 1988). Let us now look at how both Maasai males and females were gendered and how the two sexes interacted variously in their gendered performances.

### 4.3 Males

From the earliest encounters, Western travelers in East Africa portrayed the Maasai in words and pictures as the antithesis to modern Europeans (Hodgson 2001). Drawing on the exaggerated tales of Swahili traders, travelers and explorers such as Thomson (1885) and early colonial officials such as Eliot (1904) and Hollis (1904), the Maasai were depicted as a war-like 'tribe' who grazed their large herds in the vast plains and specialized in attacking and stealing livestock from other ethnic communities. For Europeans who encountered this 'nomad warrior race,' Maasai *moran* represented the epitome of a wild and free lifestyle and indeed, their reputation for courage and qualities as fighters became legendary among the British (Tidrick 1980), an image that has persistently evoked curiosity among many observers.

But the warrior archetype emphasized in European accounts represents an exaggerated reification of only one mode of Maasai masculinity. As we have already noted, the key institutions among the Maasai was the age-set and age-group regime, thus any consideration of male social roles must focus on this regime. They conceived their age-sets as passing through three main stages of male life cycle. The first was *Ilaiyok* (boyhood) which commenced from a herding age of about four to six years, to circumcision at around fourteen to eighteen years of age. The next was *moranhood*, *Ilmuran* (anglicized form *moran*), from circumcision to well beyond marriageable age at twenty to thirty years *Ilmoruak* (elderhood). The last was elderhood which itself comprised of junior elderhood, from thirty years on, and the *Ildasati* (retired/ancient elder) (Standa and Alila 1987). Let us focus on each one of them

at a time. Although I discuss them separately, some of the masculine enactments overlap and are discussed in any of the sections as is deemed appropriate.

#### 4.3.1.1 *Ilaiyok* (boyhood)

Until around the age of puberty, a male child's responsibilities were herding which began at as early an age as four years and the responsibility increased with age. Smaller boys herded small stock and donkeys while bigger boys herded cattle under the supervision of a few older men (Merker 1910). By the time a boy started herding, some animals were given to him although his mother kept them for him, and their milk was used for the household (Hodgson 1999). A boy would continue to gather livestock at numerous points in his life, and remained in his mother's home until he was circumcised. It is not until a boy had been circumcised that he formally entered the age-set system with all that was involved in terms of ritual activities and appropriate behaviour (Sifuna 1987).

#### 4.3.1.2 *Moranhood*

The *moran* age-group is often referred to in some ethnographic literature as 'warriors'. I will however use *moran* instead of 'warrior' because, as will soon become apparent, fighting and being a warrior was only one aspect of this period of their lives (albeit an important aspect). *Moranhood* comprised a secluded way of living, close association with the 'bush' and boys coveted the ideal of *moranhood* and saw it as being at the heart of Maasai identity (Kipuri 1993, Spencer 1993, Talle 1988). Boys got initiated into the age-set of the *moran* through *emuratare* (circumcision). The *emuratare* operation was a physical ordeal and the most important public opportunity for a Maasai man to display his self-control. He was not supposed to show the slightest sign of pain, not even to move his eyelids or he and his parents would be mocked and even beaten by the onlookers (Llewellyn-Davis 1981, Talle 1998).

Recent scholarship has shown that a study of the construction of masculinities in Africa needs to explore the institutions that promoted specific notions of masculinity, and in what contexts (Miescher and Lindsay 2003). Along the same line, Morrell (1998) argues that in Africa, gender regimes and identities were situated within institutions and it is these institutions that produced African masculinities. For the Maasai, a clear understanding of the *moranhoo*d masculinity calls for a recognition of the institution of *manyatta*. The *manyatta* was the village/camp where the newly circumcised *morans* from one or more localities spent most of their time. The camps were most valued as basic educational institutions where the *moran* learnt the traditions and expectations of social life in their society under the instructions of the junior elders or *olpiron* (Bernsten 1976). They learnt about the age-set brotherhood and animal husbandry skills (Coast 2000, Standa and Alila 1987). They also served as the forum in which the youth were expected to develop those debating and speaking skills necessary for the democratic administration of their society (Jacob 1961). A lot of emphasis was also placed on 'sharing and solidarity' (*camaraderie*) while displays of martial and sexual prowess enhanced individual and age-set reputation (Spear and Waller 1993). Indeed, it was mainly in the *manyatta* that the Maasai learnt the traditions and expectations of social life in their society, for prior to this boys were limited to the day-long isolation of cattle herding (Jacob 1961).

Besides, the *manyatta* also had a defensive role for the communal territory. They guarded livestock and people from raids, attacks and wild animals, as well as forming the arena from which groups of *morans* would raid their neighbours for cattle (Talle 1988). The *moran* were thus taught values of bravery and respect and the first duty of a new age-set was military thus they were taught how to use bows and arrows, shields and spears as a prelude to armed service (Klumpp 1987). The *moran* also organized lion-hunts (*olamayio*) as much as for sport as to deal with lions which had turned to be predators of livestock; "the whole affair assumed character-building importance by the great care given to the honorable dispatch of an essentially worthy foe" (Jacobs, 1965: 146). The brave man who manage to kill a lion when



he was a *moran* would be highly regarded. Conversely, a *moran* that proved to be a coward was mocked and despised (Merker 1910).

The cattle raids were meant to acquire cattle (to replenish those lost due to raids by other groups, drought and diseases) and prove the military prowess and daring of the *moran* (Holland 1996, Mungeam 1966). As one of my elderly informants put it:

“During my youth, raids for cattle were our heroism and pride. We went as far as Sukumaland in Tanzania” (RM 07).

The more daring and fruitful the raids, the more prestige accrued to warriors. There was a high degree of danger involved in the raiding both from wild animals and from the groups whose cattle they were raiding (Holland 1996). However, raiding was not seen as ‘theft’ in the Western accepted sense of a misdemeanor or crime (ole Saibul and Carr 1981). Rather, it was the playing out of a culturally recognized scenario, which was seen as a state of ambition or need rather than a moral or social flaw (Holland 1996). To more efficiently fulfill their duties, the *moran* were neither allowed to take intoxicating liquor nor tobacco (Merker 1910, Adamson 1967).

The close and intimate relationship between age-equals developed in the *manyatta* entailed mutual understanding and sharing of property such as food and animals and to some extent children’s labour and the sexual services of wives (Standa and Alila 1986, Talle 1988). After spending between ten to twelve years in the *manyatta*, the *eunoto* ceremony was performed by members of the age-set. This marked the status of a *moran* transitioning to a senior warrior. Junior *morans* were permitted to marry after the *eunoto* ceremony, but they were still regarded as a group of persons to whom the community at large could turn for public service, e.g. watering livestock during the dry season (Sifuna 1987). Eventually the *moran* became *ilpayioni*, or junior elders and later senior elders.

#### 4.3.1.3 *Ilmoruak* (elderhood)

The last age-sets rite of passage was the *orng'esherr* where senior *moran* acquired the status of elderhood and the ceremony was generally conducted approximately once in thirteen to fifteen years (Hollis 1905, Jacobs, 1965). Individual men were cross-cut by differences other than age. The junior and the senior elders were regarded as 'ruling elders' and exercised substantial power over the *moran* through a system called *olpilon*, which is a bond between alternate age-sets e.g. senior elders and senior warriors (Jacobs 1965, Standa and Alila, 1987, Waller 1976). Elders constituted the decision-making body for the locality, and were expected to fulfill supervisory or managerial roles (Grandin 1999, Klumpp 1987), with responsibility for making broad decisions on residential location, herd movement and splitting, grazing and herding (Hodgson 2001). The implication is that they exercised some control and had power over the younger men, women and children.

In addition, as men grew older, their political power as arbitrators of community and clan disputes increased as well. Men occupied certain recognized leadership positions as representatives (*ilaigwenak*) of age-grades (*ilajjik*), sections (*ilosho*) and clans (*ilgilatin*), and were responsible for consulting each other, making decisions and settling disputes about matters between homesteads, clans and communities. Their power also increased as they grew older and ideally wealthier in stock and overall reputation for successful management of their domestic affairs. This power corresponded with a man's size of family (the number of wives and children) and peaked when they became senior elders (Dirk 1984, Hollis 1904, Hodgson 2001, Jacobs 1965). As Merker (1910: 62) put it:

"For a man, a large herd of cattle and many wives are his greatest delight. He who has both enjoys esteem and respect".

There were however some mechanisms of redistribution that catered for the discrepancies in wealth. For instance, boys from poorer families worked as herders for wealthier families until they had earned a small herd of cattle for themselves while rich men on the other hand often paid up to four cattle more in bride wealth than others (Hodgson 1999). Merker (1910) also points out that real poverty was exceptional as all relations would help one another freely.

Most of men's gendered performances were constructed in the public space. They often travelled to neighbouring homesteads, visiting members of their age-set, fellow clan elders and other friends, relatives and stock partners to discuss clan and locality affairs, exchange news and information and arrange livestock grazing and watering matters. They also earned respect according to their speaking abilities and their generosity (Hodgson 2001). However, such ideals buried a range of practices contingent on individual traits, economic circumstances, and other opportunities and misfortunes (Hodgson 2003). From senior elder one became a retired/ancient elder where one gradually ceased to take an active part in public affairs (Jacobs 1965, Sifuna 1987). Age, wealth and generosity were therefore the important aspects of Maasai masculine identities. To more comprehensively understand gender roles and relations at this period let us now focus on females.

#### *4.3.2 Women*

As we found in Chapter Two, gender relations in African communities have been presented variously and with views differing as to the extent of men's domination over women. For the Maasai, earlier western feminist literature depicted their 'traditional' gender relations as inherently patriarchal and oppressive for women (e.g. Galaty 1979, Llewelyn-Davies 1978, and Spencer 1988). Talle (1988) explains that many studies of pastoral societies are descriptions of the structural and normative levels rather than organizational forms;

"This makes women and their activities by definition relatively peripheral and dormant in a patrilineal design, largely invisible, and consequently without authority or decision making power outside the realms of the household" (pp. 8).

However, later feminist literature, drawing from postcolonial feminist approaches, has voiced skepticism about this point of view. Dr Naomi Kipuri, a Maasai academician, summarizes the structural elements of Maasai social organization as 'mutual dependence' and 'mutual obligation' between men and women (1989: 97, cited in Coast 2000). As we have also noted,

similar views are expressed by Dorothy Hodgson (1999, 2001, Talle 1988) who argues that it was not until during the colonial state formation that the parameters of male Maasai power expanded to embrace new modes of control and authority, becoming something that can be referred to as patriarchal. Spencer (1993) on the other hand indicates that while women were regarded as dependants, the seniority of status and respect they commanded also increased with age. The point is that, while analysing gender relations in African contexts, and indeed, other 'Third World' contexts, we ought to be vigilant lest we fall into the widely criticised essentialist notions of gender relations in these regions.

Unlike men, women were not organised into formal autonomous age-sets. Girls and unmarried women belonged to the age-set of their father but when they got married, they were recognized with the age-set of their husbands (Dubel 1981). Most ethnographic literature summarises the three main phases of a woman's life as *intonyie* (young girls up to clitoridectomy), *esiankiki* (married woman with young children) and *entasat* (older woman with circumcised children, often beyond child-bearing age) (Coast 2000, Hodgson 2001, Talle 1988).

#### 4.3.2.1 *Intonyie* (Girls)

As young uncircumcised girls, their work was to help their mothers in childcare and other household chores such as cleaning the house, collecting firewood and water (Standa and Alila 1986, Talle 1988). They also tended the family herd, mainly small stock and calves. A girl between approximately ten and twelve years and puberty was referred to as an *esancha* ('sweetheart') (Talle 1988). This is a period when girls flirted, danced, sang, lived and associated with the *moran* in their settlements (Hodgson 1999). Within this period *intonyie* became the lovers of the young men in the current *moran* set (Klumpp 1987). However, these early sexual partners rarely formed the basis of future marriage partners (Coast 2000). Many

anthropologists have been fixated on the sexual intimacy between the *intonyie* and the *moran*, which in my view, is informed by the colonial stereotype of ‘hypersexual natives’ discussed in the next chapter. A contrasting picture is drawn by Jacobs, who states that:

“There is a great deal of European mythology concerning the supposed sexual relations which young warriors are thought to have with young unmarried girls...Though some love-making and restricted petting does go on...it generally follows strict conventions that preclude coitus” (1973: 404, cited in Coast 2000: 169).

Dubel (1981) also insists that such sexual liaisons were not expected to result in pregnancy. The same thing has been noted among the pre-colonial Gikuyu people of Kenya (see e.g. Kenyatta 1961) who for centuries have been neighbours to the Maasai and who have for long intermarried and shared numerous cultural values. Kenyatta argues that in order to develop self-control and mutual respect and love, young unmarried men and women were encouraged to have a restrictive form of intercourse, *gweko* (fondling). He however notes that when the European missionaries came to Kenya, they misconstrued and condemned it as real sexual intercourse. The same appears to have happened for the Maasai. Indeed, such liaisons very rarely, if ever resulted in conception in both the cases of the Maasai and Gikuyu. Shortly after menarche *entonyie* underwent clitoridectomy and passed into the liminal stage of *enkaibratuni* or new circumcised female (Klump 1987).

#### 4.3.2.2 Married Women

Like male circumcision, clitoridectomy and its symbolic representation was fundamental for the cultural understanding of gender identity in Maasai society. It signified a change in a girl’s social status to that of an adult woman and an entitlement to marry and bear children (Coast 2000, Dubel 1981). The girls then ceased to be sexual partners of the *moran* and soon got married and became *ensiankiki* or ‘young married women’. Married women played a variety of important roles and made the domestic decisions relating to child care, food preparation, collection of water and firewood and house building and maintenance. They cared for calves,

small-stock (sheep and goats) and sick animals. They milked cattle (and sometimes small stock) in the morning and evening and controlled the distribution of milk to the household members and visitors. They also maintained the right to trade in any surplus milk and processed animal skins, and either made clothing or sleeping skins from the hides or traded them (Hodgson 2001, Jacob 1961).

Each Maasai wife lived off the herd that was allocated to her through marriage. This herd provided sustenance for her children and herself, and became the future herds for her sons later on in their lives. By structuring the family and resources in this way, there was assurance that the sons would be supplied with adequate resources to begin their own families later on (Dubel 1981). It also allowed the family to pool resources, thus assuring a more reliable resource base for times of drought. When her first son was circumcised and entered *moranhood*, the woman was known as ‘mother of warrior’ or simply *yeiyo* (*ibid*). A woman ultimately gained prestige by the number of children she bore and sons especially represented a woman’s chief source of material acquisition through milking rights for animals held in trust (Hodgson 1999).

Similarly, women achieved varying degrees of respect in the order of wives (a first wife having authority over other wives) and their ability to manage their household property, including livestock (Standa and Alila 1987). In addition to the rights of women to cattle products such as milk and hides, husbands and wives shared overlapping rights in livestock, depending in part on how, from whom, and by whom an animal was first obtained (Hodgson 2001, 1999). Hodgson (2001) further argues that cattle were given for bridewealth and wedding ceremonies, loaned or exchanged to build patron-client or stock-partner relations, and distributed through ceremonies, fine payments and feasts while goats and sheep were circulated even more constantly for the above reasons, as well as traded for food, beads, wire and other necessities. Husbands and wives conferred and agreed on decisions to slaughter,

trade or give an animal away. Although men were the primary exchangers of livestock, women also gave livestock (usually small stock, but occasionally cattle) to one another and to men. For instance, when a Maasai man married for a second or third time, his first wife gave the new wife a calf, after which they called each other *paashe*, meaning giver or receiver of a calf (Hodgson 1999, Hollis 1904). As for small-stock, oral evidence suggests that men and women shared rights in some animals and held individual rights to others. When a woman married, her husband transferred a certain amount of cattle to her as 'house property', to be managed by her for her household's individual immediate benefit in terms of milk and hides, but also to be kept in custody for her son's inheritance (Hodgson 1999).

The ability of the Maasai to sustain their specialized production system depended in the great part on women's role as traders. Although the Maasai depended on milk and blood of their cattle, and meat from smallstock for subsistence, they supplemented their diet with grains and other foodstuffs, especially during the dry season (*ibid*). To achieve this, women created and maintained links with neighbouring agricultural groups, trading surplus milk, hides, small-stock and even donkeys for needed grain and foodstuffs such as sweet potatoes and bananas (Muriuki 1974, Thomson 1885). Besides foodstuffs, they also traded hides, milk, livestock, provisions and ivory for tobacco, cloth, glass beads and copper wire from Swahili traders who travelled in large armed caravans through their areas, as well as at permanent trading settlements (Merker 1910). In the nineteenth century, Maasai women were therefore crucial intermediaries in the extensive and active trade networks that enabled Maasai to sustain their specialized production strategy by linking them to the commodities of regional commerce (Hodgson 2001). Like men then, women were also not confined to the domestic sphere or the homestead, but variously occupied the public space in the performance of gendered roles.

As we have seen for men, political power was also structured by gender and age and ideally increased with age. Likewise, women followed a similar trajectory to that of men of

increasing power and respect through their lives (Hodgson 1999). After they got married and their young children grew older with time, they gained more respect especially once their sons became *moran*. And when their sons began to marry, and they became mothers-in-law, their authority increased and their workload decreased as they managed their daughters-in-law (*ibid*). These same sons and daughters-in-law would in turn care for these women when they became elderly and feeble *koko* (grandmothers).

Women also had varying degrees of involvement in political decisions as they could initiate, attend and testify at judicial proceedings (Hodgson 1999). They would also encourage their adult sons to advocate certain positions, lobby and confer with their husbands or directly speak their minds when men gathered in their homes to discuss their affairs over milk or alcohol (Merker 1910). For their part, adult women, especially elder women and senior wives, were responsible for settling disputes and controlling the behaviour of younger women and children in order to ensure a peaceful life within their households and homesteads (Hodgson 2001). They were also central players in negotiating marriage alliances and arrangements of their sons and daughters. Although they shared common objectives, men and women granted each other autonomy, premised on mutual respect, to pursue and manage their own affairs (*ibid*). Besides, women played important roles in negotiating peace between the Maasai and neighbouring communities in times of misunderstandings. Muriuki (1974: 84) for instance reports that in such times, “regarding Maasai-Kikuyu negotiations, it is apparent that the initiative was mostly taken by women”.

In addition, although men exercised greater formal power and authority in the political realm, women were central to the ritual sphere. Men would pray on occasion, and the *iloibonok* (spiritual leaders and diviners) were male, but it was women who were responsible for constantly mediating the relationship between Maasai and their God (*Ng'ai*) (Hodgson 1999, Hollis 1904, Thomson 1885). Women prayed for themselves and the community “at least



twice a day” (Eliot 1904: xix) “starting before sunrise each day” (Thomson 1885: 434). Women also played central roles in the numerous rituals that marked life stage transitions, such as the birth of children, naming ceremonies, circumcision rites, the passage of groups of men from one set of age-grade statuses to another, and ‘peace making’ ceremonies of neighbouring groups (Hodgson 2001).

#### **4.4 Conclusion**

This chapter has presented the gender organization of the Maasai on the eve of the British colonial rule in Kenya in the late nineteenth century. We have seen that age and sex were important elements in structuring gender roles and relations. There were social expectations for feminine and masculine behaviour. To an extent then, we can conclude that gender relations had an element of essentialism in that many of the roles men and women performed depended upon their biological sex. In their gender roles set-up, older men held relatively higher power positions than younger men and most women. However, in essence, power depended not just on sex but also very importantly on age, wealth and leadership abilities. Given this, it would be rather simplistic to strongly conclude that gender relations were simply patriarchal, as has been the case of many anthropologists who have written on Maasai gender relations. The division of labour was for instance not always clear-cut between the various age groups, both male and female, ranging from children to elders. Boys and girls for instance performed the role of herding which makes sex-role differentiation not very straightforward. Livestock management roles and responsibilities and conditions by which livestock were accumulated were largely determined by one’s age set. Their production system was also organized by age and gender and so was political power. Politically, men and women were responsible for different spheres of interaction. To a large measure, the age-set system emphasized ‘communal manhood’ which stressed common social bonds or what Hodgson (2003) refers to as ‘generational masculinity’. The culture of the gift, hospitality, and reciprocity linked people together. We have also seen that livestock and especially cattle

occupied a central position in the Maasai pastoral economy and in the construction of their identity for both men and women. Indeed, the age-set system underpinned and was reinforced by the livestock-centered economy. As Hodgson (1999, 2001), Kipuri (1989) and Coast (2000) suggest, contemporary gender relations among the Maasai which have been described as 'patriarchal' because of men's political and economic domination of women, are not inherent to pastoralism as a mode of production or an ideology. Indeed, it is clear that at any one time, some women may have held significant power positions while some men may have held relatively less power. There is still more scope for understanding pre-colonial Maasai gender identities and indeed, historians, archaeologists, linguists, and others are still exploring, reconstructing and debating pre-colonial Maasai history. This discussion of gender relations and roles among the Maasai is supplemented and substantiated further in subsequent discussion in appropriate sections of the later chapters.

## Chapter Five: “I hope your cattle are well”: colonialism and Maasai masculine identities

### 5.1 Introduction

“Colonialism has often been seen as a quintessentially masculine project, consisting of white men subjugating and ‘civilizing’ ‘natives’, also male” (Waylen 1996: 46).

Scholarship on gender in colonial Kenya has by and large been about women (see e.g. Kipuri 1989, Okeyo 1980, Presley 1986) with a few exceptions (e.g. Myers 2002, White 1990a, 1990b), which are rather limited in scope. Thus there remains a relative dearth of scholarship on men and masculinities in the Kenyan colonial context, which points to a need for more studies that construct a scholarship about masculinity around the history of Kenyan men as gendered beings. However, the existing historiography of colonial Kenya (e.g. Berman 1990, Dilley 1966 [1937], Hobley 1929, Lonsdale 1989, Murphy 1986, Ochieng 1977, Ogot and Ochieng 1989, and Tignor 1976) among others, provides fertile grounds for further explorations of the history of masculinities.

Indeed, there are many texts that specifically deal with the colonial history of the Maasai people of Kenya and Kajiado District in particular (e.g. Dilley 1966 [1937], Eliot 1904, Gorham 1979, Hobley 1970 [1929], Hollis 1904, Jacobs 1965, James 1939, Kipuri 1983, Mungeam 1966, Ndege 1992, Rutten 1992, Thomson 1885) and which shed some light on the effects of colonization on Maasai masculinities, but they *lack an explicit focus on masculinity*. Indeed; “masculinity is an implicit theme of many existing treatments of African history” (Miescher and Lindsay 2003: 9). In addition, Petersen (1998: 9) points out that; “few histories focus explicitly and systematically on the framework of knowledge within which ‘masculinity’ and male subjects have been constructed”. Thus my endeavour here is to unearth the silences imposed by the lack of this explicit focus by (re)reading these materials from a postcolonial perspective in order to construct a history of Maasai masculinities. As Ouzgane and Coleman (1998:8) emphasize:

“Postcolonial criticism must carefully attend to the ways in which different kinds of masculinities are products of specific cultural, political, geographical and economic locations”.

This chapter therefore aims at analyzing the colonial experience of the Maasai in an attempt to historicize their masculinity since, as Morrell and Swart (2004: 91) point out, “Colonialism was a highly gendered process”, and in Africa was perceived as, “an assault on African masculinity” (Miescher and Lindsay 2003:16). Others (e.g. Greig, *et al* 2000, Migley 1998 and Sinha 1987, 1995, 1999) have also pointed to the fact that colonial administrations often problematized the masculinities of the colonized such as in India, North America and South Africa.

It will not be possible to cover all aspects of the dynamics of the British and Maasai masculinities for the sixty years of colonial rule and I therefore will discuss what I deem as the most important aspects in the context of this thesis. As we saw in Chapter Two, masculinities have historical dimensions in that they come into existence at particular times and places and are always subject to change (Connell 1995). As such, my focus is much more on the material and discursive historical specificities of masculinities in the colonial era rather than on broad historical generalizations. To achieve the above, the chapter starts with a discussion of the nurturing and nature of British colonial masculinities. This is important because it makes us understand the genesis and nature of their hegemonic status which was instrumental in the colonial project. Indeed, “one of the main sources of hegemonic masculinity has been in the construction of ‘Otherness’” (Nurse 2004: 30). Through this process the West constructed a discourse which legitimated its presumed dominance and provided a rationale for powerful engagement with and intervention into the world of the ‘Other’ in the case of the Maasai. The colonial administration’s attitudes, policies and practices and their impacts pertaining to land, livestock, sexuality, education and age-sets will then be presented and discussed within the framework of postcolonialism and the theory of hegemonic masculinities. Using insights from these theories, I for instance show that the

subjugation of the Maasai during this period entailed 'Othering' through the denigration of their cultural values and way of life and that issues of power were central to the colonial project. Indeed, and to paraphrase Ouzgane and Coleman (1998), postcolonial criticism contributes substantially to the study of masculinities as it enables us to identify different kinds of masculinities and it reminds us to locate those differences in material and discursive histories that resist the production of differences as if they were normal or natural. I also however, show that to some extent, male identities of both the British and the Maasai shaped each other. My argument here is that such attitudes, policies and practices of the colonial administration had far reaching impacts on Maasai male identity. This is in line with Wiesner-Hank's (2001:168) remarks that:

"The study of the history of masculinity and its aftermath has received a great deal of attention from geographers, who are increasingly investigating broader issues such as the development of national identity and cultural constructions of difference".

This is also in line with feminist geographers' considerable contributions to recent critiques of the spatial imagination of British imperialism in Africa via critical gendered analysis of both exploration geography and the practical implications of imperialism's spatiality for colonial rule (Berg 1999, McEwan 1996, Myers 2002). Susan Morgan (1996: 11) also points out that: "In the discourse of the British colonial enterprise, gender, always itself a racialized category, is inseparable from geography". Indeed, and to paraphrase Wilson (1977), history is grounded in geography and nowhere more so than in Africa.

## **5.2 The making of British colonial masculinities**

"Nineteenth-century British masculinity was itself implicated in the history of British imperialism" (Sinha 1995: 8).

Existing literature indicates that British colonial culture deployed masculinity as a form of power. Wiesner-Hank (2001) for instance points out that questions about the relationship between gender and political life especially in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries did not play themselves out independently in any country, but were closely tied to international politics and issues of imperialism. Thus to develop historical and materialistic understanding of

'British' masculinity from the perspective of political, economic, and ideological developments of the nineteenth century requires extending the exclusive national frame of reference to recognize its location in a wider imperial social formation (Sinha 1995).

It has been established that the imperial states created by European powers to rule the new empires were entirely staffed by men and they developed as states based on the force supplied by the organized bodies of men (Connell 1995). The Empire;

“was a gendered enterprise from the start, initially an outcome of segregated men's occupation of soldiering and sea trade. When European women went to the colonies, it was mainly as wives and servants within the household” (*ibid*: 187).

So, how were British imperial masculinities moulded? The enduring soldier hero narrative (in the West and Britain in particular), and the public school culture seem to have been most instrumental here. Dawson (1994) for instance shows that the soldier hero has proved to be the most durable and powerful form of idealized masculinity within western cultural tradition since the time of Ancient Greece. In his book, *Soldier Heroes*, he traces a history of British heroic masculinities from nineteenth century imperialism to the present and examines their internalization in the lived identities of men and boys. He identifies the relationship between changing forms of imperial adventure narratives and 'the imagining of masculine subjectivities' in Britain and pinpoints the continuing psychic resonance of the imperial soldier hero as symbol of imperial British masculinity. As he explained;

“Military virtues such as aggression, strength, courage and endurance have repeatedly been defined as the natural and inherent qualities of manhood” (Dawson 1994: 1).

Later, during the growth of popular imperialism, in the mid to late 19<sup>th</sup> century, heroic masculinity became fused with representations of British imperial identity. This linked together the new imperialistic patriotism with the virtues of manhood and war as its ultimate test and opportunity and a 'real' man would henceforth be defined and recognized as one who was prepared to fight (and if necessary, to sacrifice his life) for queen, country and empire (*ibid*).

Martin Green (1980) has also notes the close association between the growth of the British Empire and its representation in adventure fiction with a male protagonist. Michele Cohen (2004) also opines that in the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, chivalry provided a vocabulary for refashioning the English gentleman as masculine and English, integrating national identity and gender with enlightenment notions of progress and civilization, and with empire.

On the other hand, the importance of *public schools* in the nurturing of British colonial masculinities cannot be overemphasized (Mangan 1995, Morrell 1998, Sinha 1995). The role of the public school is probably best captured by Mangan's observation that, "once the empire was established, the public schools maintained it...they generated imperial enthusiasm" (1995: 21). It was in the public schools that the sons of the bourgeois and professional middle-class were indoctrinated in the dominant class ideology of rule whose intention was to achieve the sort of remote control process that was viewed as appropriate for the public service (Berman 1990). The public school headmasters especially played the role of agents of instilling such hegemonic values (Mangan 1995). The 'ancient' universities, as Bruce Berman (1990) indicates, completed the process of preparation. In 1911-2 for instance, six out of eight, and in 1912-13, all five of the new administrative cadets sent out to the East Africa Protectorate had been to Oxford or Cambridge (*ibid*). The attributes sought in these administrators were clearly spelt out in the then confidential colonial office Appointments Handbook:

"A man's natural qualities derive partly from inheritance and home environment and partly from school and academical training. If he comes from the stock that has proved its worth, generation by generation, in the professionals or in the public service, if he has been reared in the faith that duty and chivalry are of more account than ambition and self-seeking, if education has broadened his mind in that faith and taught him the meaning of that responsibility....then he has many of the qualities of which you are looking for. The truth of this is uncontestable" (Francis Newbolt, Appointments Handbook, cited in Berman 1990: 100).

Interestingly, as Berman also points out, the brilliant or markedly intellectual student, the introspective man who might question received ideas was deliberately avoided in favour of

modest intellectual achievement, athletic prowess, a taste for outdoor life and, implicitly, unquestionable acceptance of the 'aristocratic' ethos of rule and the ideals of imperialism. This resonates with the observation by Blom (1999) that to British officials, masculinity was seen as expressing itself in an athletic and strong body, in the ability of self-control and restraint and implicitly in the capability of governing others. In Kenya colonial men saw themselves as practical men and had little time and patience for abstract analysis. As one Provincial Commissioner put it; "we should not allow...the results of our work to be undermined by infiltration of the 'political theorists'" (Berman 1990: 105).

To an extent however, the Kenya case was not an isolated one. In the establishment of imperial rule in South Africa for instance, Robert Morrell (1998) likewise shows that the process of subjugating Afrikaner and African opponents alike was led by white British men, many of whom had a public school upbringing:

"The notions of superiority and toughness taught in these schools were reflected in the way in which colonial rule was established...a willingness to resort to force and a belief in the glory of combat were features of imperial masculinity and colonial progress" (ibid: 616).

These then were the kinds of masculinities that were let loose in the colonies in Africa and among the Masaai people in particular, masculinities inclined toward chivalry and domination. As is implied here, colonial administrators and soldiers, implicitly or explicitly, had been indoctrinated into believing in the morality of colonialism. It is no wonder then that they tended to strongly believe in the 'civilizing mission' of colonialism; the white man's burden, as some would put it. Evidence, in the words of Kathryn Tidrick, "certainly suggests that the majority of the officials plunged energetically into what they perceived as the challenging job of guiding the Maasai along the path of progress" (1980: 26). Accordingly, most of the colonial administrators were former soldiers such as Sir Donald Steward, Sir James Hayes, and Sir Percy Girouard, to mention but a few, who were at one time or other commissioners of the East African Protectorate. Let us then focus on the impacts of colonialism on Maasai masculinities.



### **5.3 Impact of colonization on Maasai Masculinities**

#### **5.3.1 *The application to trusteeship on the Maasai***

The ideology of trusteeship, introduced in Chapter Two, is important in the context of this thesis in that it was used to justify the colonial policies and practices, which were central to the legitimation of colonialism among the Maasai in Kenya. Thus a starting point in understanding colonialism is to look at how it was legitimized through the application of the concept of trusteeship. In postcolonial terms, the concept of trusteeship is closely related to an ‘often neglected’ (Berman 1990) set of factors namely power and knowledge production which are also central to postcolonialism. In their book, *An Introduction to Postcolonialism*, Childs and Williams (1997: 233) point out that “knowledge gives rise to power but is also produced by the operations of power”. Berman (1990) also indicates that the development of bureaucratic state forms such as the colonial state rested on systematic knowledge in the form of collection and circulation of information, which in turn allocated them power. This was the case, as elsewhere, for the colonial state in Kenya as we shall see below.

Like the colonial administrators, the settlers (who had much interest in Maasai land as will soon become clear) in Kenya also had plentiful channels of access to political power, both formal and informal, as they had lots of influence on advisory committees regulating settlement, production, and African labour (Wasserman 1976). They also had informal access to power afforded by ties of blood, friendship, and class, which existed between the upper reaches of the colonial state, the settler leaders, and the British aristocracy (*ibid*). The control of the flow of information would thus shape the perception of local conditions by the higher authorities and defined the available range of policy options. This was especially marked at the district level with regard to the Field Administrators’ supposed knowledge of Africans and claim to a unique understanding of local conditions, a claim generally accepted by the higher authorities and built into the formal lines of communication within the Kenyan Colonial Administration (Berman 1990).

The information collected is said to have been haphazard and reflected very limited knowledge of indigenous culture and institutions. The Colonial Office in London relied on such information, while the colonial state apparatus in Kenya had ample opportunity to ensure that such information depicted its actions in the most favourable light (*ibid*). Such information was collected within the framework of the colonial mandate of trusteeship, which, as mentioned earlier, linked imperial legitimation with notions of racial superiority and development. For example, two groups who were interested in Maasai land; the settlers, and enthusiasts for wildlife conservation, would generate information to the effect that Maasai were useless and unproductive idlers sitting on land that could be put to better use (Tidrick 1980). This is part of the ‘myth of empty land’ which settlers used to justify land alienation (Sorrenson, 1968), itself part of “the wider colonialism’s masculine spatial discourse” (Myers 2002: 29). The discourse idealized such land as empty (virgin land) that had to be ‘developed’ by colonists, whom as we have seen were almost always men. The development of game reserves was often seen as strengthening the notion of service as a constitutive part of white colonial masculinity, a narrative of masculine heroism (Brooks 1997, cited Morrell 1998).

Thus the notion of trusteeship was extensively used to justify colonization of the Maasai. Sir Charles Eliot, the first and then commissioner of the protectorate in 1904, for instance had this to say of the future of the Maasai:

“The only hope for the Maasai is that with intelligent guidance, they may eventually settle down and adopt a certain measure of civilization. Any plan of leaving them to themselves with their own military and social organization untouched seems to me fraught with great danger for the prosperity of the tribe” (1904: xxviii).

Hobley, one of the colonial administrators involved in the alienation of Maasai land discussed below, also had this to say about the Maasai:

“The Maasai have, if the younger generation proves receptive, a great future as stock owners, and if wisely guided by district officials who can attain their confidence, it is believed that all will go well” (Hobley 1929: 126).

Hemsted, again a colonial administrator in Maasailand, had this to say of the Maasai in a

1921 Annual Report:

“The Masai are a decadent race and have survived through being brought under the protection of British rule. ...They remain primitive savages who have never evolved and who, under present conditions, in all probability, never can evolve. They live under condition of indescribable filth in an atmosphere of moral, physical and mental degeneration” (quoted in Tignor 1976: 16-17).

These statements can be seen in postcolonial terms as part of ‘Othering’ meant to “reinforce the binary of primitive (savage) and modern (civilized)” (Ashcroft 1998: 196). Such denigration of the Maasai was meant to rationalize colonialism as a developmental project. As Watts (1995: 49) observes, “development as a cultural condition has been linked historically to the absence of development (‘the primitive’, ‘the uncivilized’ and to development alternatives)”. Murphy also points out that such conceptions, preserved within British public schools, found renewed application in a colonial service for which the notions of a barbarous and primitive Africa buttressed the supremacy of a political order which had long declined in Britain; “Africa was here the category which replaced an upstart British working class” (1986: 62). A number of commentators have also pointed out that discourses of racialization should not be seen simply as processes of ‘othering’, “but also as a means of articulating, culturally and spatially, forms of normative whiteness through which settler subjectivity was given meaning” (Popke 2003: 249).

The point here is that the colonial notion of ‘intelligent guidance’ as espoused by colonial administrators like Eliot, Hobley and Hemsted was part of the ideology of trusteeship used to legitimize subjugation. Indeed, instead of appreciating the nature of the pastoral economy, the colonial state dismissed pastoralism as a backward form of production and a barrier to civilization, which had to be ‘breached for the sake of development’ (Ndege 1992). I argue that this application of the ideology of trusteeship can be viewed as a part of the performance

of the hegemonic masculine identity. What this discussion indicates at is that colonialism was not constructed on the ethos of equality, justice and so-called universal rights. Let us now focus on the initial contacts between the Maasai and the British.

### *5.3.2 Initial contacts*

The aim of the discussion in this section is to show that the initial contacts between the British and the Maasai had some implications on the masculine identities for both groups. The story of Britain's imperial interest in the East African interior and the subsequent colonial conquest has been often told (see e.g. Ogot and Ochieng 1989, Ochieng 1977, Sutton 1992, Ochieng and Maxon 1992) and cannot be repeated here in any detail. It has however been noted that militaristic ideas of manliness went hand in hand with the scramble for Africa and British colonial enterprise (Berg 1998, in Myers 2002). The primary reason for the extension of formal colonialism to Africa in the 19<sup>th</sup> century was economic as this phase of economic imperialistic expansions is inextricably linked to the development of industrial capitalism in Europe (Rodney 1972). Other reasons include security, emigration and prestige (Mangan 1995, Waylen 1996).

The establishment of colonial rule in Kenya entailed the application of the British military masculine ethos discussed earlier and was greatly aided by their possession and use of more destructive weaponry in the form of firearms. The British are said to have employed violence on a "locally unprecedented scale, and with unprecedented single-handedness" (Lonsdale 1989: 6). Violent confrontations between the Maasai and Europeans occurred almost simultaneously in Northern and Southern Maasailand: "In the north, an expedition fought its way across the Laikipia Plateau (1890) and dealt heavy losses to the Maasai" (Berntsen 1976: 43). It was the same case in Tanzania as one Maasai elder there reported in the early 1980s:

"I was about eight when I witnessed the first battle between the Germans and the Maasai, it was a black page in our history. Our people were forced to submit to the

arrogance of the Germans. They flogged 4 of our field commanders, then hanged them in public because they resisted German entry into Maasailand” (Ole Saibul and Rachel 1981: 115).

What is specifically clear here is that the military masculinity of the colonizer subjugated and marginalized the Maasai *moran* warrior masculine ideals by use of technologically superior weaponry (firearms) thus enabling them to gain hegemonic masculine status. Thus firearms can be said to have enhanced the Europeans’ capacity to perform the hegemonic idea of colonial masculinity. The instruments of war for the Maasai warriors were mainly shields, spears, bows and arrows, which clearly were less lethal than firearms whether deployed for defensive or offensive purposes.

Between 1895 and 1904, however, the Maasai and the British entered an informal alliance to further their mutual interests (Waller 1976). The Maasai, having been earlier hit by animal plagues, needed time to recover while the British, hampered by lack of money and inadequate number of troops, relied on the Maasai to supply irregular troops. Maasai *morans* thus acted as mercenaries in ‘pacifying’ other African groups in Kenya in the ‘punitive expeditions’ creating a period of friendship and cooperation between the Maasai and the Europeans (Berntsen 1996, Waller 1976). These were actually wars of conquest and subjugation achieved by “raiding, swashbuckling and shooting ‘natives’” (Mungeam 1966:13). The Europeans thus enabled the Maasai to replenish their herds, by using rather traditional methods, namely, raiding. The usual terms of service were that in return for their assistance they received a share of the loot (Mungeam 1966, Rutten 1992).

As mentioned earlier, in pre-colonial times, the Maasai raids were undertaken to acquire cattle and prove the prowess of the *moran* thus enabling them to enhance their masculine identity. Here it would appear that the British and Maasai *moran* masculinized ethos of use of violence formed a mutually beneficial alliance. It is also important to note that the *morans*’ participation in this alliance, as in other instances of raiding, had the blessings of the elders.

This means that the elders were also part of this alliance since they applied their hegemonic masculine ideal of managing the affairs of the community by allowing the *moran* to be involved in the alliance. I further argue that to an extent, the British colonial masculinities and the Maasai masculinities can be said to have been mutually constitutive in the sense that they assisted each other in actualizing their respective masculine ideals. Both the *moran* and the Maasai elders also acquired livestock through those raids and as has been shown, the possession of livestock was an important aspect of their masculine identity. For the Maasai warriors, their participation in the raids in addition allowed them a chance to participate in an activity that mirrored the martial orientation of their warrior masculine tradition. Likewise, the British colonial masculinity was enhanced in that the raiding afforded them a chance to actualize their military masculine ethos of control. However, the above alliance ended when the strategic position of the British changed and Maasai *moranhood* masculinities soon came under sustained assault, as we shall see later, and which suggests some ambivalence in the relationship between the British and the Maasai masculine ethos. Let us now turn to the issue of the alienation of Maasai land and its impact on masculine identities.

### 5.3.3 Land

The alienation of land during colonial times has become a major concern in postcolonial studies. In his recent book, *Postcolonialism: A Very Short Introduction*, Robert Young (2003) emphasises this concern in a case study of Brazilian peasants. He discusses a grassroots movement that is involved in 'postcolonial politics' (pp. 48), in their fight against gross material injustices that have resulted from colonial land alienation. In this section, and in the same spirit of 'postcolonial politics', I will argue that the very process of alienating Maasai land by the colonial administration, especially during the two infamous 'moves', and the subsequent reduction of the Maasai pastureland, had demasculinizing effects on the Maasai men. Land was basic to their pastoral way of life mainly because their livestock, which was central to their subsistence and social relations, depended on it for pasture, water and

saltlicks. As we saw in chapter four, livestock was an important aspect in the construction of Maasai masculinities. To signal the end of the Maasai-British political honeymoon, the Maasai were not only forced to vacate their pastures but were consigned to the unattractive southern reserve (Ndege 1992, see also figure 2). How did the moves happen? Between 1896 and 1901, the colonial government constructed a railway connecting present day Uganda with the Kenyan coast (Evangelou 1984) and its completion opened the interior of the East African Protectorate (EAP) and in particular the Maasai plains and Highlands around the Northern Rift Valley. The then Commissioner of EAP, Sir Charles Eliot, encouraged Europeans to settle by making promises of large tracts of farming land in those highland areas of the Rift Valley which were best 'suitable to white habitation' (*ibid*). Eliot considered it indefensible that the Maasai should be allowed to stand in the way of European 'development' in this area and in a series of memos to the Foreign Office in 1903-4, he made it clear that he considered Maasai economic and social customs 'abominable' and he had no qualms about seeing them destroyed by large scale European penetration in the Maasai area (Gorham 1979). In a letter to Lansdowne, the Foreign Secretary, in April 1904, Eliot declared:

"Your Lordship has opened this protectorate to white immigration and colonization, and I think it is well that, in confidential correspondence at least, we should face the undoubted issue – viz; that white mates blacks in very few moves...there can be no doubt that the Masai and many other tribes must go under. It is a prospect that I view with equanimity and a clear conscience. I wish to protect individual Masais ...but I have no desire to protect masaidom. It is a beastly, bloody system, founded on raiding and immorality, disastrous both to the Masai and their neighbours. The sooner it disappears and is unknown, except in the books of anthropology, the better" (cited in Mungeam 1966: 113).

It was assumed that pastoral communities like the Maasai possessed no rights to land and had no more than a temporary right to grazing (Dilley 1966, Sorrenson 1968). Indeed, land was idealized as empty or under-utilised and thus awaiting 'development'. Other studies have also shown how such myths of empty land were used to justify the dispossession of indigenous people of their land such as in the Americas (Sluyter 1999) and Australia (Head 2000).

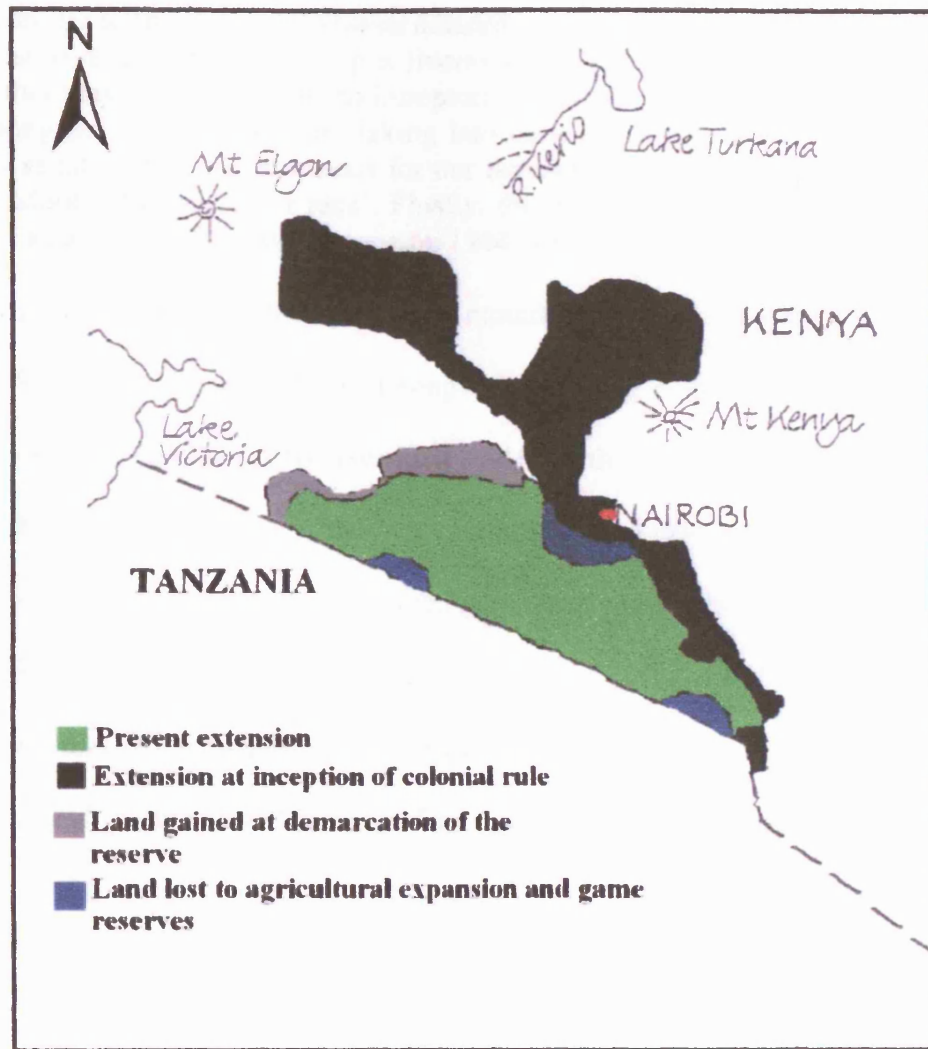


Figure 2: Land Losses by by Maasai in Kenya [Adopted and modified from Talle (1988)].

Let us examine the first move. The late Sir Charles Stewart, who succeeded Sir Charles Eliot as Governor, discussed the 'Maasai question' immediately after his arrival and came to the conclusion that the removal of the Maasai from the Rift Valley was the best solution (Keiwua 2002). This was achieved through the so-called agreements between the colonial officials and the Maasai. This led to the removal of the so-called Northern Maasai to a reserve on the Laikipia plateau north of Nairobi (Mungeam 1966, Sorrenson 1968). The basis of this Maasai move was a formal treaty whereby Maasai rights in Laikipia were guaranteed in the area 'so long as the tribe should exist' and the provision was made so that no Europeans or other settlers should be allowed to take up land in this reserve (Sorrenson 1968). Commissioner Stewart wrote this paternalistic yet fatalistic report to the Foreign Office on the treaty:



“According to the treaty the Maasai decided on their ‘own free will’ ....that it is our best interest to remove our own people, livestock into definite reservations...away from any land that may be thrown open to European settlement’. They recognize ‘the government is taking up this question, are taking into consideration our own interests’. They are ‘fully satisfied that the proposals for our removal to definite and final reserves are for the undoubted good of our race’. Finally, the treaty was to be enduring as long as the Masai as a race shall exist” (Sorrenson 1968: 195).

The Foreign Office approved the move with remarkably little hesitation (*ibid*). Asiema and Situma (1994) and Keiwua (2002), among others, have now shown that what actually happened in 1904 is that the *Laibon* (spiritual leader) of the Maasai was induced with presents to have the Maasai vacate some of the rich agricultural land used traditionally as part of their grazing ground. Wilson (1977) has noted that frequently, the device of treaties only postponed forceful conquest. One of the colonial administrators, C. W. Hobley, actually acknowledged that if the Maasai did not move peacefully they would definitely have been forcefully evicted (Hobley 1970 [1929]). The second move was to happen later as discussed below.

In 1911, under settler pressure, a second treaty was signed between the British and the Maasai to move the inhabitants of the Northern Reserve to the Southern Reserve in order to free up more land for the settlers. This treaty contradicted the first treaty, which had stipulated that ‘no Europeans or other settlers should be allowed to take up land in this Northern reserve’. The move began in June 1911 and was completed by March 1913 (Sorrenson 1968).

The treaty again contained the ludicrous statement that the Masai signatories,

“...being satisfied that it was to the best interests of the tribe that the Masai people should inhabit one area and not divided into two sections.... Enter of our own free will into the following agreement...” (*ibid*: 204).

This indicates the irony in the colonial officials’ belief in their ability to act ‘in the best interests’ of the Africans to, ‘protect the African against himself’. However, a group of younger men tried to challenge the legality of this move in court, *Ole Njogo v. Attorney General* (1911-1914), arguing that it was a breach of the 1904 agreement (Jackson 1998, Keiwua 2002). Through their lawyer, they asked the Colonial Office to suspend the move,

pending the hearing of the case and after a number of attempts by the administration to obstruct the case; it was finally decided after the move had been completed (Sorrenson 1968). The case was dismissed with costs on a legal technicality, and thus the merits of its plea were not argued in court (Keiwua 2002). Mr. Justice Hamilton who presided over the case argued that:

“The Commissioner in 1904 and the Governor in 1911, in entering into the treaties, were exercising the powers granted to them under the Foreign Jurisdiction Act, 1890 and the East African Order in Council, 1902. On the other hand, the other party to the treaty-were ‘not subjects of the crown, nor is the East African British territory....[It is] in relation to Crown a foreign country under its protection, but its native inhabitants are not subjects owing allegiance to the Crown but protected foreigners, who, in return for protection, owe obedience’....there was no legal contract ...between the protectorate government and the Maasai signatories...” (Sorrenson 1968: 208-9).

It appears then that the judgment would have a wider significance because it placed the protectorate authorities in a position of legal irresponsibility as far as Africans were concerned. It was a constitutive feature of colonial states that they refused to universalize political rights across racial lines; “instead it was a polity based on Cecil Rhodes’ cunning dictum; ‘equal rights for every civilized man’” (Murphy 1986: 61). This ruling is reminiscent of how the colonial government manipulated the laws to its advantage and marked the end of any hopes that the Maasai might have had of ever getting their lands returned to them (Asiema and Situma 1994).

The outstanding thing about the moves was that they were achieved without violence. It appears that the Maasai leaders proved successful in enforcing obedience and overcoming resentment among the rank and file by stressing the futility of resistance (Tignor 1972, 1976). The Maasai undertook these detested moves because they knew the futility of resistance since they had witnessed the might of the British military when they fought on the side of the Colonial Administration in a number of punitive raids against other communities (*ibid*). Tignor (1972) also notes that however, the Maasai moves had much the same impact on the leaders who agreed to them and the warrior class who did not resist when they had completed their two mass migrations. As he points out, the Maasai were reeling from the psychological

impact of a defeat fully as disheartening and disruptive as military conflict (p: 275). I would then argue that given the painful awareness by Maasai men, especially the warriors, of their own military impotency *viz-a-viz* the British, the moves had a psychologically demasculinizing effect on their masculine identity.

During these so-called 'Maasai moves' of 1904-5 and 1911-12, some 7000 Maasai, 200,000 heads of cattle and 600,000 sheep and goats were transferred from the Northern to the Southern area (Native Affairs Department, *Annual Report, 1913-14*, see Talle 1988: 27). 'It was the greatest exodus of men, women, children and livestock ever seen in Africa' (The Daily Nation, 01-10-2001). These moves resulted in the Kenyan Maasai being concentrated in a much reduced, government controlled Southern Reserve, referred to as the Kenyan Maasailand today, and were the first steps deliberately taken toward alienating pastoral Maasai from their vital rangelands. Among the communities in Kenya, the Maasai lost the largest area of land (Sayer 1999, Tignor 1976). By 1915, over four and a half million acres of Maasai land had been alienated for white settlement (Ndege, 1992: 96) most of it being dry season pastureland. As we saw in chapter one, the Maasai had developed over time a flexible use of their environmental resources, taking advantage of their temporal and spatial variations. Thus the loss of the high-potential areas meant that the Maasai traditional freedom of movement with their livestock was restricted to the reserves. These reserves remained closed districts until 1967, when the independent Kenyan government declared them open (Asiema and Situma 1995).

This alienation of Maasai land can be seen as a move that seriously undermined their traditional spatial strategy of production as it restricted their mobility, flexibility and their access to key resources. It is no wonder then that Maasai pastoralism began to have detrimental effects on the local environment, due largely to growing populations which resulted from the loss of high potential dry season grazing land on which their traditional herding system was based (Glover and Gwynne, 1961, Jacobs 1975, Tignor 1972). It has been

shown that overstocking and overpopulation resulting from loss of pasturage (Evangelou, 1984, Sindiga, 1984) hampers the reproductive rate and productivity of the herds and especially when we consider the fact that significant parts of this Southern Reserve were tsetse fly infested. Tsetse fly causes *nagana* in livestock and sleeping sickness in humans.

The loss of dry season grazing land was soon felt in 1915 and 1916 when, due to lack of adequate rains, a determined attempt was made by *morans* to return to the Northern Reserve and it was only stopped through military threats by the colonial state and persuasion by elders who convinced them of the futility of the action (Leys 1924, in Rutten 1992:223). Between the 1920s and 1960s, progressively greater areas of land were also alienated from the Maasai with areas being set aside for expatriate settlers, for cultivation from politically dominant tribes, and for exclusive wildlife habitation (Homewood and Rodgers 1991, Sindiga 1984). The 1954 National Parks Ordinance for example declared some parts of the reserve to be national parks and game reserves from which the Maasai and their livestock were excluded (Asiema and Situma 1995). These are the present Nairobi, Tsavo West, Amboseli and Maasai Mara National Parks. Moreover, in 1924, a huge land concession of some 900 square kilometers with several vital perennial streams was appropriated for Magadi Soda Company to exploit the soda deposits at Lake Magadi (Rutten 1992, Sindiga 1984). The status quo of this company has not changed to this day (Sindiga 1984) and has a daily turnover of about \$2.8 million (The East African Newspaper 09/02/2004). The Maasai were never compensated for the loss of this land.

All these land losses resulted in even greater compression of Maasai within the ecologically less desirable remaining rangeland areas with only a small fringe of the territory having good grass all year round and nearly all permanent streams controlled by settlers (Sindiga 1984). During the colonial period, the Maasai lived in this area and remained more or less isolated from the encompassing society (Talle 1987, Waller 1976). The extensive alteration of traditional Maasai animal husbandry and cultural ecology led to severe land degradation and

even the compulsory and often half-hearted government programs to respond to this resource deterioration backfired (Sindiga 1984). Clearly, all these seriously compromised the sustainability of the Maasai nomadic pastoral livelihood. It has been noted how the ‘moves’ *per se* had a demasculinizing effect on the Maasai. I further argue that by reducing especially the dry season pastureland, which also had important water sources and salt licks, and increased exposure to animal diseases, the Maasai were severely restricted from actualizing their masculine ideal of being successful livestock keepers. For example the elders’ masculine ideal defined by their managerial and supervisory roles (making broad decisions on residential location, herd movement and splitting, grazing and herding), must have been compromised to a great extent by the above restriction on access to traditional pastoral resources. The situation was further aggravated by the policies on livestock as shown below.

#### *5.3.4 Livestock*

“During the colonial rule, the incorporation of Maasai livestock into the marketing system was legally inhibited in order to protect the developing European beef industry” (Galaty 1981: 81).

Other than the issue of alienation of land, colonialism also had adverse implications on Maasai masculinity through livestock production practices and policies. During the colonial period, colonial administrators provided little incentive to develop pastoral production (Homewood and Rodgers 2001, Sindiga 1984). As one of my elderly Maasai informants also confirmed: “Colonial policies did not permit Maasai to get grade cattle to improve their stock” (RM19). Instead, the administration discouraged Maasai pastoralists from marketing their cattle or buying breeding bulls to upgrade their stock through selective breeding using Boran bulls (Helland, 1977, 1980, Mungeam 1966, Talle 1987). These bulls had always been selected with great care to produce animals adapted to dry conditions (Rutten 1992, Sindiga 1984). The supply of such bulls came from Samburu and Somalia. With their fixed reserve boundaries and European settled farms forming a block to the north, the Maasai were completely cut-off from the new Boran stock (Zwaneberg and King 1975, cited in Rutten

1992). This policy, to borrow words from Franz Fanon (1967), smashed the Maasai people's old world without giving them a new one. It destroyed the traditional foundation of their existence and blocked the road of the future after having closed the road of the past. Again this can be seen as another policy that undermined an important traditional spatial production strategy, which is intimately linked to notions of masculinity.

This protection of the settlers' livestock industry also prohibited the introduction among the Maasai of European bulls (Rutten 1992). Ironically, the settlers were in need of African cattle to start their farms. Animals confiscated/looted during the 'punitive expeditions' during the period of 'pacification', were sold at private auctions to settlers (*ibid*). The strict regulations of livestock movements to and from their 'reserve', while allegedly due to the adverse disease situation, was nonetheless part of a wider policy aimed at protecting colonial settlers from any potential competition (Helland 1977, Mungeam, 1966, Talle 1988, Tidrick 1980) as, for instance, Maasai exclusion from the 1950's lucrative meat market (Homewood and Rodgers 1991). Evidence such as the 1937 Annual Report of Masai District also clearly shows that veterinary quarantines were used to keep the Maasai from competing with settlers (see Tidrick 1980). Outlets for selling surplus animals also became restricted (Sindiga 1984), except during wartime when the British army needed meat (Tidrick 1980). In addition, Maasai men as the designated heads of households were required to pay tax to the colonial government for most of the colonial period, which had to be paid mainly from money obtained from the sale of livestock (Tignor 1972). In general therefore, the Maasai were excluded from the protected European activities of dairying and quality beef production. By contrast, during the colonial period the British colonial administration provided relatively good market conditions and terms of trade for livestock in Tanzania in an attempt to encourage offtake from pastoralist herds (Homewood 1995). This could be because the white settler community was not as established in Tanzania as it was in Kenya.

The alienation of the best Maasai pastureland combined with the above restrictions on their livestock production practices eventually impaired the ability of many men to actualize their masculine identities. The Maasai identity as a community has for long been associated with their land. As Spear and Waller (1993: 247) emphasise:

“Maasai identity was rooted in a sense of place, however mobile and extensive that might be, and land in its use and control runs as a subtext throughout Maasai history”.

The implication here is that their collective identity, derived from occupying a specific space, was undermined by the alienation. In addition, and related to the issue of identity, land has for long been basic to the Maasai pastoral way of life as their livestock depended on it for pasture, water and saltlicks. Livestock provided them with food as they mainly subsisted on a pastoral diet of milk, blood and meat, though they also bartered some grain with their crop-farming neighbours. Livestock was however not only a means of subsistence but was as well the medium of transactions and any meaningful and important relationships such as marriage was validated and legalized through livestock transactions. Success in pastoralism thus reflected the highest Maasai cultural ideals and practices.

In essence then, alienation of land and restriction on livestock production meant the destruction of the basic pre-requisites for a pastoral existence. I suggest that this undermined the Maasai masculine personal and collective identity based on the pastoral ideal. As has been shown elsewhere in chapter four, the relationship between being male, being Maasai and pastoralist is central in the construction of Maasai masculine identity. Marrying many wives and siring many children made one a respectable adult male. Dowry was paid by means of livestock and the lack of livestock with which to pay bridewealth commitments could have led to a delay in marriages. As Talle (1988: 151-2) points out,

“Young men, of small means...are likely to have a hard time finding a wife. When some Maasai have difficulty in finding a girl to marry, the reality is they cannot raise the bridewealth requested by their fathers”.

This implies that anything that compromised men's ability to rear more cattle indirectly compromised this masculine ideal. Indeed, the Maasai have, since pre-colonial times, seen themselves as 'people of cattle' and to be properly Maasai one had to own or at least have secure access to cattle (Waller, 1999) and there was a strong link between stock, identity and status. Indeed, cattle and ethnic identity were inseparable among the Maasai (Arhem 1985: 100). The term *inkishu* (cattle) also referred to the Maasai as people and the common greeting among people was to say, "I hope your cattle are well" (Salvadori and Fedders, 1973: 9).

In addition, when a woman got married, her husband transferred a certain amount of cattle to her as 'house property' to be managed by her for her household's immediate benefit in terms of milk and hides and also to be kept for her son's inheritance (Hodgson 1999, 2001, Talle 1987, 1988). Thus anything that would jeopardize the cattle rearing strategies would inevitably create poverty and curtail the husband's capacity to transfer 'house property' and by extension, provisioning for his family. By the same token, the son(s) of such a married woman would have fewer cattle to inherit and their potential to actualize and consolidate their masculine identity would likewise be limited.

In addition, the elaborate system of livestock transactions was also part of a pastoral ethos of solidarity and sharing among men that helped solidify their collective masculine identity. For instance the exchanges of livestock in marriages were mainly between men (in-laws) as men would marry-off their daughters to fellow men. As indicated earlier, the masculine power of the elders was to an extent derived from their control of the *moran*, women and children in the livestock production relationships. This would then mean that such power would be eroded or weakened by any actions that would restrict livestock production, as this would then limit their field of control. Colonial policies and practices on land and livestock made the performance of traditional Maasai masculinities increasingly difficult.



### 5.3.5 Sexuality

“The way in which black men are positioned has become central to the ways in which we think about men in postcolonial contexts” (Morrell and Swart 2004: 109).

Taking my cue from the above sentiment, in this section, I will show how the colonial politics of sexuality were important aspects in the undermining of Maasai masculinity and in particular how the gender ideology of masculinity was an important element in the rationalization of imperialism. Colonialists arrogated themselves the role of policing the norms and boundaries of sexuality and, inevitably, masculinity. In the racialized discourse of colonialism, African subordination was represented as weakness, effeminate, or ‘childlike immaturity’ (Cornwall and Lindisfarne 1994). Being a ‘native’ and being a ‘man’ were seen as incompatible (Brown 2003). Colonialists often referred to their mature African men workers as ‘boys’, (Brown 2003, Morrell 1998, Shaw 1995). Thus a hierarchy of different understandings of masculinity served as a trope for western superiority, featuring the virility and modernity of colonizer as opposed to the effeminate traditionalism of the colonized (Blom 1999).

Arguments based on gender relations and gender identities among the Maasai were used to point to certain defects in their society, which made it unfit for self-rule and self-determination, and resonates with the wider ideology of trusteeship. Maasai men were for instance effeminized (Webster 1999, Huxley 1959). This tendency to depict colonized men as effeminate and unworthy of political rights and self-determination has also been found in French colonial policies (Blom 1999). Elspeth Huxley’s description of Maasai men of *moran* age employed as domestic workers during colonial times exemplifies this:

“These haughty, long-shanken young men had shaved their pigtails when they donned the kanzu of office and looked noble and heraldic in their green sashes, like the figures from the Egyptian friezes...seeing them in the house; it was as if one were to come across a couple of panthers in the boudoir. They trod softly and were delicate in their movements, and they dusted with the care of a woman; there was, indeed, something

strangely effeminate about the warriors of this aggressive, battle hungry tribe” (1959: 215-16).

Thus they were seen from an ambivalent perspective as occupying masculine and at the same time feminine subject positions. Not even their God was spared, “The religious ideals of the Masai are ...vague and unformulated. The commonest word for God is *Eng-ai*, which is substitutive with a *feminine* article” (Eliot 1904: xviii). This is despite the fact that the word *Eng-ai* means the sky (Kipuri 1983) and is neither male nor female. Their morality and thus procreative capacities were also problematized:

“The problem of the Masai goes much deeper than the mere improvement of tribal physique...the birth rate is very low, despite the existence of polygamy and great sexual activity. The sterility is part due to widespread existence of venereal disease” (James 1939: 68).

This shows an unfounded disregard for Maasai masculinity, for a study such as Ernestina Coast’s (2000) research on the issue shows clearly that colonial administrators grossly exaggerated the presence of venereal diseases among the Maasai. In the same token, the British also accused Maasai men of displaying a singular lack of ‘self-control’. The Victorian values of the coloniser considered ‘manly self-control’ a very important attribute of the civilized man (Mosse 1985, cited in Sinha 1987). The 1911 Report on the Maasai notes that:

“Even more than the *morán*, the elders suffer from the evil effects of idleness and self-indulgence, on the account of both inebriety and sexual license” (James 1939: 68).

The alleged sexual indulgence of the Maasai was thus being condemned as unmanly, as such sexual practices were believed to corrupt the moral fibre of men. The elders were being attacked for being polygamous. The British were however particularly opposed to the prevailing open attitude to sexuality between the *morán* and the uncircumcised girls and thus mainly directed their criticism against the *morán*. This led to the cohabitation of *morán* with the girls being interdicted (James 1939) through compulsory abolition of the *manyatta* system. British Colonial rulers often regarded customs that they deemed ‘harmful’ to women such as ‘child-marriage’ and sati in India and clitoridectomy, that has been practiced by the

Maasai for long, as a clear sign of backwardness and barbarity of indigenous cultures and thus their need for outside rule (Midgley 1998).

Such colonial government views and measures to rescue the Maasai women from abuse cannot however be divorced from the dictates of the colonial situation which was quite contrary to such apparently philanthropic concerns i.e. they cannot be dissociated from the constraints of colonial project. It has for instance been shown that such concern about the condition of women did not arise from a general interest in the status of women, rather, it was motivated by, “the political necessity of demonstrating the inferiority of the masculinity of the colonized” (Sinha, 1987: 218). In addition, during the colonial era, indigenous and European structures of patriarchal control are said to have reinforced and transformed one another, “evolving into new structures and forms of domination” (cf. Mama 1996: 5). In fact, colonial policies (such as the monetization and commoditization of the Maasai economy) have been shown to have specifically enhanced Maasai male dominance over their women counterparts, thus marginalizing them (Hodgson 2001, Talle 1988). This was mainly achieved through the introduction of taxation where men were forced to pay taxes as they were taken to be the heads of households and more importantly *the owners* of livestock property. Dorothy Hodgson (2001: 16) explains that:

“The emergency of ‘patriarchy’ among the Maasai is related to colonial ‘development’ interventions and state formations and specifically the division of the complementally, interconnected responsibilities of men and women into the spatially, hierarchically gendered domains of ‘domestic’ and ‘public/political’ and the consolidation of male control over cattle through the commodification of livestock, the monetization of the Maasai economy, and the targeting of men for development interventions. Incorporation into the state system reinforced and enhanced male political authority and economic control by expanding the bases for political power introducing new forms of property relations and subscribing female autonomy and mobility. Together, these processes shifted the contours of male-female relations, resulting in the material disenfranchisement and conceptual devaluation of Maasai as both men and pastoralists”.

While Hodgson’s views are based on her study of the Maasai of Tanzania, there are pointers to similarities with the Kenyan Maasai. Talle (1988) for instance notes that among other men

in Kenya, the Maasai men were the most heavily taxed as they were assumed to be the richest. As one of my elderly respondents in Kisaju Village also put it:

“The whites...tricked the Maasai to get their cattle and land. They also forced Maasai men to pay taxes. The District Commissioner would come with *askaris* (security men) with guns and get oxen by force when you failed to pay colonial tax” (RM 19).

What this suggests is that the colonial policy toward Maasai women was conditioned by a standard of ‘manliness’ as it did not challenge male dominance in general but only the specific forms of male dominance found among the Maasai.

We can thus conclude that the concerns pertaining to Maasai sexuality seem to come from a desire to demonstrate the immoral (read ‘unmanly’) practices of the Maasai male rather than from a purely humanitarian concern for the Maasai women. Thus it would seem that the assumed subordination of women traditionally among the Maasai provided a useful rationale for the continuation of British rule by questioning the masculinity of the Maasai. Racial discourse in general represents African men as hypersexual as Frantz Fanon (1967) among others, has noted, while the convergence of colonial and racial stereotypes produces a troubled gender configuration in which an African man occupies masculine and feminine subject positions (Hassan 2003). Bob Connell refers to this as: “the racialized paradoxical emasculation and superphallicism of African men” (cited in Ouzgane and Coleman 1998: 2).

The use of gender as a way of praising or belittling not only individuals, but also whole cultures, has also been observed in Enlightenment cultural histories (Shear 1996). Combining criteria of race and gender, non-Europeans were characterized as ‘hideous’ and ‘dark-coloured’ people with feminine cowardice (*ibid*). One important task for a postcolonial geography, therefore, to paraphrase Popke (2003), is to analyse the cultural ‘work’ required to maintain this fiction, to recover the lost voices of the marginalised, and in the process problematise the historical configurations of power/knowledge through which the nexus race/whiteness has been constituted historically over space. Along these lines, I have tried in

this section to demonstrate that the commitment to the Victorian ideals of manliness, and the belief in Maasai 'unmanliness' were an important feature for the rationalization of colonial rule.

We may however note that in this politics of sexuality, the British also depicted some ambivalence and, indeed, some colonialist men even envied (if not emulated) the perceived Maasai masculinist privileges of sexual license (Shaw 1995). This further indicates the mutual constitutiveness of Maasai and British masculinities. I now move on to consider the impact of colonial education among the Maasai.

#### *5.3.6 Colonial Education*

"Early efforts at education were resented and resisted in most African societies, but few people resisted with such tenacity as the Maasai" (Tignor 1972: 175-6).

Gorham (1978, 1979) and Tignor (1972) among others, have comprehensively documented the history of colonial education among the Maasai. This section mainly draws from their work by critically analysing it within the context of this thesis. The history of educational promotion in Kenya Maasailand is largely one of popular resistance by the local pastoral population to both the content and objectives of formal schooling. Unlike much of the rest of Colonial Kenya, Maasailand was not significantly influenced by the activities of Christian Mission Societies and, among other things, this meant the responsibility for educational provision in the area since the 1920's has rested almost solely with the government (Gorham 1978, Tignor 1972). As such,

"The government education in Maasailand was an integral part of the policy of indirect rule for the area and the main aim of the school system were part and parcel of the wider socio-economic objectives which the colonial administration sought to achieve in Maasailand, the later consisted of attempts to down tone or eliminate certain 'distasteful' Maasai customs such as the traditional *moran* or warrior system, cattle raiding and nomadism" (Gorham 1978: 8).

One consequence of this policy was that Maasai education was not designed to produce artisans or clerical personnel for the settler economy or the colonial administration, as was the

case in most other communities in Kenya (Gorham 1978, 1979). Rather, a few years of elementary education with a heavy bias on agriculture and other non-academic activities was felt to be sufficient for Maasai needs within the Reserve and would, it was felt, contribute to long term social change by directing students' attention away from conditions in the 'traditional' economy. Schools for instance encouraged farming and the abolition of the age-set system and pastoral subsistence practices (Dubel 1981). This can be viewed as an attempt to develop new masculine ideals among the Maasai especially bearing in mind that this education solely targeted males. There was strong parental opposition to such education from the very beginning. Not only did Maasai see the school as a direct threat to the labour requirements associated with traditional pastoralism, but it appeared very clear to them that what most of the schools were attempting to teach conflicted sharply with certain Maasai core-values. As such, formal education, more so in Maasailand than in any other part of the colony, quickly became synonymous with a rejection of the traditional Maasai customs and core-values (Gorham 1979).

Early in the century the *moran* had actually violently opposed attempts to establish schools, as they likened schoolgoing to an unbearable loss such as the death or enslavement of Maasai children (Tignor 1972). They felt that by going to school, the children would be lost forever to the society. There was therefore considerable institutional reluctance to education from the beginning in Maasailand and officials saw no option but to *forcibly* recruit students to the schools on a yearly quota basis. This was a system whereby the leaders of each Maasai section were required to provide recruits for a three-year course and although there was no basis for this measure in colonial legislation, the threat of substantial cattle fines, applied at the section level, was sufficient to gain compliance of the ruling elders. However, the children who were frequently selected (by the elders) for the quota system were those whose importance to the traditional economy, because of some mental or physical infirmity, was only marginal. Alternatively, they sent recruits whose traditional status in the Maasai

community was low, mainly because of their mixed ethnic origin. The end result was that the schools had many children who were either unable to fully participate in the academic and practical aspects of the school programme, or those who were not fully representative of traditional Masai society. It is no wonder that some prominent Maasai professionals and politicians in contemporary Kenya have often been accused of not being 'pure' Maasai and therefore not true representatives of the Maasai people. A very good case in point is a former Kenyan vice-president and a professor of mathematics, among others.

This initial reluctance to send children to government Maasai schools in the 1920's and 1930's deepened as it became clear that their educational participation had very little to offer graduates in the way of improved job opportunities or economic return in attempting to stress alternatives to traditional economy such as carpentry, masonry, and a variety of commercially oriented subjects. School authorities had given little consideration to the level of demand for such services and occupations in the reserve (Gorham 1978). The virtual non existence of a cash sector in Maasailand together with the difficulty which students faced (because of low academic qualifications) in trying to compete for jobs outside the Reserve resulted in immediate and, in most cases permanent, unemployment for school leavers – something which was not designed to create a more favourable attitude to education among parents and ruling elders. This situation persisted throughout the 1940's and 1950's. While belated attempts were made to reorient Maasai education along lines more relevant to existing conditions in the reserve, experiments with animal husbandry instruction at the primary level and with so-called school ranches were interpreted by the increasingly politically conscious Maasai as thinly veiled efforts to expropriate more grazing land, restrict their mobility and indoctrinate their children (Gorham 1979).

In addition to these problems concerning relevance of early Maasai education, there was also the problem of the lack of facilities. In Kajiado for example, by 1963, only 22 primary

schools existed to serve an area of over 22,000 sq kms and more than half of the schools were located in three main township centres (Gorham 1978). As such, effective access to education was limited to less than 10 percent of the district primary school age population and ironically over 70 percent of these were children of non-Maasai parents who were either traders or government officials stationed in the district. This was the situation until Kenya's independence in the early 1960's. It would appear that the colonial state tried to use education to facilitate the nurturing of certain identities, or and more appropriately what Hodgson (2001) calls 'categories of social control'. The masculine ideals of the Masaai discussed earlier (pastoralist and warrior aspects especially) were the major targets of this education.

#### 5.3.7 Gender and generations

This section will further illustrate how colonial policies and practices also interfered with the pre-colonial organization of Maasai masculinities by creating conflicts in the age-set system. As we have thus noted, Maasai masculinities were mainly organized around the age-set system. It will be shown here that during the colonial period certain masculinities pertaining to elderhood were being privileged at the expense of the *moranhood* masculinities. As Thomas McClendon (2002: 1) says:

“In recent scholarship, conflict between gender and generations has proved key to understanding much of African social history, especially in the colonial era”.

The colonial administration tried to suppress those aspects of the Maasai *moran* organization that they felt were inimical to social change and orderly government (Tignor 1972). Earlier efforts in this direction involved attempts by colonial government officials 'to modernize' the *manyatta* system by using activities such as sports, road work, or their lion hunting with spears and other experiments in applied anthropology to maintain their manliness (Tidrick 1980). Such efforts by the colonial authorities can be viewed as attempts to control the Maasai *moran* warrior expression of masculinity as in violence, and to further entrench the



monopoly of violence by the hegemonic colonial masculinity. The efforts can again be seen as yet another attempt at developing new masculine ideals among the Maasai. These efforts failed as the Maasai believed that their own traditional education system was working, according to their own criteria, and did not view with favour the introduction of alien elements (*ibid*: 20).

When these administrative attempts to bring *morán* under control were deemed as a failure, policy and practice now shifted in the direction of direct abolition and the destruction of the *manyatta* system. The first Masai Provincial Commissioner Mr. R. W. Hemsted (1911-23) regarded the system as the basis of Maasai conservatism, especially their refusal to embrace colonial education. He thus forbade the continuation of the *manyatta* (James 1939). This, in effect, meant the contraction of the space for the cultural production of *moránhood* masculinity. The goal was to limit the military capacity of the *morán* by disarming them, hastening the *eunoto* ceremony, at which time they settle down and become senior warriors, and by disbanding the warrior *manyattas* (Tignor 1992).

To achieve the above objective, the administration, through the policy of indirect rule, allied with the hegemonic authority (read masculinity) of the elders by broadening and deepening their control over younger men (warriors) and women. This can be seen as a formation of companionship between British colonial masculinities and the masculinities of the Maasai elders. Thus colonial interest in maintaining and extending administrative control was intimately bound up with, and dependent on, the authority and control exercised by elderly men. Literature indicates that ‘traditionally’, there had always been potential for tension between the *morán* and the elders, and this was much intensified by the above policy. This can also be seen as part of ‘divide and rule’ policy adopted by the British to entrench their hegemony over the colonized. Commenting in the context of the theory of hegemonic

masculinities, Kimmel (1999: 62) notes that, “You have power if you can take advantage of differences between people”.

The attack on *moran* organization was thus not designed simply to eradicate their raiding activities, it was part and parcel of a greater programme to shift authority into the hands of elders who, unlike the warriors, showed some willingness to assist the government in modernizing Maasai society (Tignor 1972). However this willingness by the elders was not quite voluntary. Cattle raids by the *moran* for example were punished by imposition of enormous collective fines on all elders and *moran* alike. Since the elders were wealthier, they shouldered the heaviest burden of repayment, thus their economic interest dictated co-operation with the government (Tignor 1972). Ordinarily, the *moran* were expected to build their own herds through raiding and attempts by elders to restrict this activity not only clashed with custom, but also undercut the economic wellbeing of the *moran*;

“By hastening the *eunoto* ceremony and shortening the warrior period, the economic and social statuses of the *moran* were being further jeopardized. When the junior *moran* graduated to senior *moran*, traditionally they had already established their own flocks and were economically able to contemplate marriage, but now with raiding reduced and the junior-warrior period shortened, many *moran* did not have enough wealth to marry” (*ibid*: 187).

To this extent, it can be said that many a *moran*’s potential to progressively consolidate and thus enhance his masculine identity by marrying, were effectively curtailed. The ending of cattle raiding was one of the most unpleasant consequences of European control, for the warrior system lay at the heart of their social organization. Warrior life had become highly specialized, and, as with any important feature of their life; its sudden removal had serious consequences (James 1939). For long, the *moran* had probably enjoyed the greatest prestige in the society and many Maasai regarded the warrior years as the zenith of their lifetime (Tignor 1972). Now, with raiding and defence of the community curtailed, the *moran*, having little to do, felt an enormous loss of status (*ibid*), which suggests that they experienced some identity crisis (masculine anxieties) as a result. In her research, Papathanassiou (2004) also established that raiding livestock from other communities by young men (like the *moran*),

early last century in some rural areas of Greece, was an important means of being a man or of establishing a respected masculine identity in their community.

Among the *morán*, with the contraction of opportunities for the expression of this type of masculinity under British rule, it was observed that:

“The intense alertness, which formerly characterized this class...turned to listlessness, ...the old vigour succeeded by ennui” (James 1939: 67-9).

However, even in the face of this militarily more powerful adversary, resistance from the *morán* occurred. Indeed there were several quite serious outbreaks of violence against the government in Kenyan Maasailand (Tidrick 1980), which can be seen as a way of reasserting the suppressed warrior aspect of their masculinity. As we saw in chapter two, one of the concerns of postcolonial approaches is the resistance of the subjugation to the hegemonic power of the adversary. For Frantz Fanon, an important figure in postcolonial studies (see Chapter Two), violence is the source of the liberation of the subjugated masculinity. In *The Wretched of the Earth* (1967), Fanon wrote:

“At the level of individuals, violence is a cleansing force, it frees the ‘native’ from his inferiority complex and his despair and inaction; it makes him fearless and restores his self-respect” (cf. Breckenridge 1998: 671)

In general, these deliberate efforts to suppress one form of masculine identity typify the extent and forms of colonial interference with traditions regulating gender relations. While the elders could benefit from colonial presence, and could attain powerful political positions in the new administrative framework, the *morán* were threatened with what seemed to be distasteful aspects of colonial social change. Studies elsewhere have also found that precolonial generational struggles (between junior and senior masculinities) were heightened by colonial intrusions, for instance in South Africa (Morrell 1998) and Namibia (McKittrick 2003), by colonial officials allying with older men to uphold their rule.

Efforts to find a congenial outlet for alleged energies formerly used in raiding included attempts to interest the *moran* in physical culture and sports, such as in the Nairobi Athletic Meetings, and employing them as policemen. Early in the century it had been hoped that the Maasai warriors would find a new outlet for their energy by serving in the Kings African Rifles, but they were not enthusiastic (James 1939), and later they refused to fight on the side of the British during the first and second world wars and even during the *mau mau* war of independence in Kenya in the 1950s. It can be interpreted that by their refusal to take sides and participate in these wars, they were denying the British a chance to again appropriate the military aspect of their masculinity and thus they were asserting their agency. This can also be read as part of their resistance to subjugation.

#### **5.4 Conclusion**

This chapter has analysed Maasai masculinities within the context of the material and ideological politics of the Kenyan colonial period. It has drawn a connection between imperialism and the ideal of manliness and shown how foreign domination was mediated through a set of gendered relations and gender identities. We have seen that the imposition of colonial rule (thus colonial masculine hegemony), often through violence, interfered with but did not completely alter Maasai masculinities. It has also been noted that the colonial masculine ideals employed the concept of trusteeship, grounded in the civilizing mission, to legitimize their marginalization of Maasai 'traditional' masculinities. Thus using the insights from postcolonialism, we can conclude that the chapter deconstructs the colonial discourses which construe the Maasai as a population of degenerate types on the basis of racial origin in order to justify conquest and establish systems of control. Indeed, the twin projects of 'civilizing' and 'Othering' went together.

More specifically, I have looked into the issues of land alienation, livestock policies and practices, sexuality, education, and generations to tease out the various power dynamics that

impacted on Maasai 'traditional' masculinities during the colonial period. Efforts to undermine Maasai masculine ideals included interference with their spatial production strategies, imposition of an alien education system, problematizing their sexuality, and application of indirect rule, which essentially amounted to the use of divide and rule strategies. In general, this resulted in a masculinity in which men lost their means of survival (or were constrained) and their cultural expressions of masculinity problematized. For the most part, the Maasai *moran* masculinities particularly remained suspect and marginalized and thus destabilized, making them express their feelings of emasculation in violent ways. We can conclude that this was a crisis of masculinity understood in the sense of a threat to the symbolism and materialism that reproduced masculine identities. Looking at the above from the perspectives of the theory of hegemonic masculinities, we can conclude that the British colonial masculinities, which, as we have noted were deliberately nurtured for the imperial project, were instrumental in the general subordination of Maasai masculinities. This subjugation however was contested and negotiated actively or passively by both the *morans* and the elders, which in itself suggests that the colonial administration was not a monolithic force imposing its will on an unresisting indigenous population.

We can also conclude that this chapter has proved to be a window onto the ambivalences and contradictions within the British colonial ideology and practices among the Maasai. For the most part, the relationship between the Maasai and the colonialists was rather ambivalent and their masculine contestations somehow mutually constitutive. In one strategic instance, the British and the Maasai formed an alliance, which was mutually beneficial such as during the 'punitive expeditions' and also when the elders proved to be valuable allies in suppressing the *moranhood* masculinity. However we have also noted that the elders were not just enthusiastic to form alliances as they were often blackmailed into such alliances, for instance the application of collective punishments for the real or perceived wrongs committed by the *moran*. There was also an ambivalent gendering of Maasai men, seen as simultaneously

hypermasculine (great warriors) and also having feminine characteristics. For the elders, their alleged sexual 'license' was distasteful and 'unmanly'. The British colonial administrators are also said to have admired and even somehow respected the warriors and the *manyatta* system, the 'training school' of the warriors. The *manyatta* system reminded them of the 'public school', which they had gone through (Tidrick 1980, Tignor 1972). All these ambivalences can be seen as a manifestation of the broader ambiguities within Britain's African empire (Myers 2002). This is in line with the observation by Popke (2003: 248) to the effect that postcolonialism;

"signals concern with the often ambiguous and contradictory forms of power/knowledge and representation that structured territories, social conventions, and subject positions within the context of colonization".

The British and the Maasai masculinities can be said to have been in a way mutually constitutive in the sense that to an extent, the constructions of masculinity at given times and places were determined by the views and actions of the other. Thus for instance the *morans* would frequently get into violent outbursts as a way of protesting the colonial administrators' suppression of their warrior system which would in itself prompt the colonial administrators to 'act violently' (actualizing their masculine military ethos in the process) to contain such outbursts. We can conclude that the history of masculinities among the Maasai in colonial times was essentially about power relations manifest in a network of variously interrelated relations of race, ethnicity, nationality and generations of men and also women. Finally we can conclude that this chapter has by and large contributed in making colonial masculinity visible in the scholarship on gender and the history of the Maasai people of Kenya thus making a contribution to research on masculinities and colonialism.

## **Chapter Six: ‘More *maendeleo* for the Maasai’: State policies after independence, gender and masculinities**

### **6.1 Introduction**

Having looked at the impact of colonialism on Maasai masculinities, this chapter critically analyses the independent Kenyan government’s development policies and practices and how they have impacted on gender among the Maasai people of Kenya with a view to unearthing the issues underlying changes in the construction of masculinities and the crisis therein. After independence, some Europeans took out Kenyan citizenship, while others left Kenya within a few years. Some of the former Maasai land (before the colonial alienation) was sold by the settlers to other Kenyan communities in the form of small holder settlement schemes for the mostly non-Maasai former squatters in the farms and to large scale well-off African farmers. Finances to buy out these ‘European farms’ were provided by loans as well as grants from the UK, the then West Germany, and the World Bank (Rutten 1992).

In this chapter I thus show that after Kenya’s independence in 1963, the process of alienation of Maasai land was reinforced. Particular attention is given to policies and practices on land resources as development in Maasailand has mainly, but not exclusively, meant interventions in the form of restructuring of land ownership and related land use policies and practices. I will further show that land alienation and land reforms have had far reaching repercussions not only for the relationship between individual families, but also for the relationship and distribution of authority between the spouses within the family and for gender relations in general, including masculinities. I will achieve this by critically addressing the impact of government land reform policies and practices on the subdivision of communally owned land into group ranches, the later subdivision of group ranches into individual holdings and the alienation of Maasai land through the creation of game parks and national reserves. The chapter will complement more detailed and focused studies which have been done on these policies (e.g. Cheeseman 2002, Eriksen and Ouko 1996, Galaty 1992, Gradin 1986,

Homewood 1995, Leneman and Reid 2001, Luseneka 1996, Ogolla and Mugabe 1996, Rutten 1992, Talle 1988, 1987, among others) and contribute by bringing to the fore issues pertaining to gender relations and masculinities, which have hitherto not been explicitly analysed as they relate to the said policies and practices. The discussion more specifically teases out social, political and economic relations that lie beneath property issues of land, with a view to bringing into the fore issues pertinent to the crisis of masculinity among the Maasai. In this regard, the connections between the local, national and international forces and how they impact on the livelihood of the Maasai is also to be drawn. In the spirit of postcolonialism, the chapter exposes the continuities from the colonial to the independent era and shows that such continuities continue to adversely impact on Maasai people's livelihood strategies and to compromise their communal way of life and thus identities. As Popke (2003: 248) rightly puts it;

“Postcolonialism is not only concerned with issues that are merely of ‘historical’ interest, for the legacy of such colonial processes continue to haunt the boundaries of contemporary identities and social and cultural formations”.

I argue for instance that the conversion of formerly communally owned Maasai land to private ownership had its ideological basis from the colonial era policies that ‘granted’ the ‘White Settlers’ private ownership to the alienated Maasai land. I also suggest that the World Bank and other western institutions were accomplices in the scheme. In the same spirit of postcolonialism, the chapter challenges the stereotypical ‘received wisdom’ in the form of the ‘tragedy of the commons’ and ‘the cattle complex’ concepts used as the rationale for the privatisation of Maasai land. The application of these concepts is exposed as unjustified interventions which have led in part to the wider colonial scheme of ‘Othering’ the Maasai and their way of life to justify ‘development’ interventions, and to bring the Maasai and their resources into the orbit of the wider global capitalist economy. In addition, the connection between postcolonialism, wildlife, conservation and tourism is also drawn. It is argued that wildlife conservation is yet another legacy of colonialism, which continues and reinforces the exploitation of Maasai resources by western, neo-colonial interests, with very little trickling



down to the Kenyan economy, let alone the Maasai, whose land was appropriated for the creation of such conservation areas. These appropriations were carried out without compensation being made for the loss of land to the Maasai and was wrongly justified within the rhetoric of 'development' that depicted the Maasai as 'enemies of wildlife'. I argue that these policies and practices have had serious negative impacts on Maasai identities that were closely tied to their livestock production strategies.

The chapter also specifically focuses on the main research site, Kisaju Village, with the aim of providing a more detailed and grounded case study analysis of land and contemporary gender dynamics in Ngong. Specifically, socio-economic aspects of the household heads are presented and discussed with the aim of providing some preliminary contextual basic demographic and socio-economic data. I thus introduce some aspects of the village and its inhabitants and discuss some indicators of the changes in the Maasai way of life associated with modernization and development. Such data pertains to age, sex, religion, and educational attainment. Changes in gender relations and related attitudes are analysed within the dynamics of the social, economic and cultural changes occasioned by the development project. More specifically, the chapter will examine contemporary issues pertaining to ownership and transactions of land, and how they have impacted on Maasai masculinities. As some writers, such as Asinyabora (2000) have shown, studying gender roles provides an appropriate indicator of the changes in the construction of masculinities in Africa. Using insights from the theory of hegemonic masculinities, the chapter thus analyses how development has impacted on the dynamics of power between and within sexes and the resultant implications for gender relation and roles and ultimately for masculinities. How the Maasai are adapting to the changes discussed is also an important focus of the chapter.

## **6.2 State policies, Gender and some issues of Maasai masculine identities**

The section starts with a broad but brief review of land reforms in Africa, narrowing down to Kenya and subsequently Maasailand, the main focus of the study.

### *6.2.1 The African context*

“The independent African state has shown no more consideration for pastoralists’ rights to land than its colonial predecessors” (Markakis 2004: 11).

In sub-Saharan Africa, academic interest has been generated around the question of access to, and struggles around, land ownership, or what is now known as ‘the land question’ (Kanyinga 1998). Land reform has been advocated as an ‘instrument of development’ in sub-Saharan Africa since independence, based on the neo-liberal economic model promoting greater agricultural productivity as a result of titling (Kanyinga 1998, Shipton 1992, Smith 2003) which, it was suggested, would promote land investments, credit supply and efficient land markets. As Smith (2003: 210) puts it:

“‘Customary’ tenure is considered by most modernisers to be inefficient and in need of reform, usually towards an individual freehold system patterned on western land law. Neoclassical economic arguments described tenure security’s positive effects on incentives and markets”.

This thinking has also been reflected in the World Bank’s sectoral work and Structural Adjustment Programmes, which have been supporting titling efforts on the assumption that this would ensure secure land rights, activate markets and increase agricultural production (Kanyinga 1998). However, empirical studies in Africa have largely failed to find any of these positive effects; indeed they have revealed negative effects of titling policies especially by worsening the tenure insecurity of poor farmers, including pastoralists, whom such policies should have helped (Benschop 2002, Fernandez-Gimenez 2002, Homewood 1995, Shipton 1992, Smith 2003). Indeed, postcolonial studies of masculinities have suggested that the

defence of private property is part of wider European masculine ideologies (cf. Ouzgane and Coleman 1998) introduced to Africa during colonialism.

Generally the relationships between governments and pastoralists in Africa have been troublesome and marked by deep misunderstandings of the nature of the problems involved in maintaining a pastoral existence. Johan Helland probably captures this relationship between pastoralists and the state in Africa more aptly and is worth quoting at length:

“Pastoralists are being gradually drawn within the orbits of governments and states, but there seems to be a strange paradox characterising this relationship. On the one hand it is thought that pastoralists have considerable contributions to make to the national economy, with their large herds and ‘surplus’ of cattle (the existence of which is doubtful). On the other, governments destroy the basic pre-requisites of a pastoral existence by circumscribing grazing lands and often seizing parts of them, often parts with the highest potential and greatest strategic value for pastoral subsistence” (1980: 21).

#### *6.2.2 The Kenyan Case*

Like many other African countries, soon after independence in 1963, the Kenyan state embraced the development-as-modernization discourse and arrogated itself the role of ‘bringing’ this development to the people. These were the hey days of modernization theory. The new state had inherited from the colonial state an economy that was primarily agricultural and this sector was now seen as very important in achieving development. Land was therefore seen as an important factor in this development process. Indeed, the issue of land ownership in Kenya has been at the centre stage of local and national politics for a long while and is currently one of the most sensitive and emotional issues in the ongoing constitutional reforms in the country. Kenya has an extremely unequal distribution of land even as the majority of the people live in rural areas and mainly depend on land for their livelihoods. This distorted ownership is mainly rooted in the colonial alienation of land from various Kenyan communities, among them, as we have seen, the Maasai.

Political change since 1963 in Kenya has done little to bring about much needed economic change for the vast majority who were dispossessed during colonialism. It is generally accepted that independent Kenya did not affect a major ideological or structural break with the colonial state and that all it did was to expand the former colonial administrative and economic structures (Ochieng 1992). This has often led to Kenya being labelled a 'neo-colonial' state in economic, political and cultural fields.

W. Ochieng (1995), arguably one of the most prominent Kenyan historians, informs us that the most important single set of decisions underscoring the future of African agriculture in Kenya came in the 1950s regarding African land tenure and registration. These decisions were contained in the recommendations of the East African Royal Commission of 1953-1955, which deprecated the system of the African communal land and argued for individual title deeds, and also in a report prepared in 1954 by the then deputy Director of Agriculture, R. J. M. Swynnerton, (*'A plan to Intensify the Development of African Agriculture in Kenya'*). The 'Swynnerton Plan' aimed at displacing indigenous land tenure systems and imposing private property rights along the lines of English land law (Swynnerton 1954), the argument being that the reform of African land tenure was a prerequisite of agricultural development. Consolidation, enclosure and registration of title, it was argued, would make credit available for improvements and enable 'progressive farmers' to acquire more land (*ibid*). The plan claimed that the conversion from customary arrangements to western-style freehold titles would achieve political and economic transformations, creating a class of 'yeoman farmers' who would be more productive and amenable to modernization. Similar arguments were made by colonial governments in Francophone Africa (Smith 2003). Thus, the Land Registration (Special Areas) Ordinance of 1959 and the Registered Land Act of 1963 were enacted to achieve individualization of tenure among the African people in Kenya. These efforts to create a uniform land tenure nationally, characterised by private ownership ignored the cultural and environmental contexts. Even today, the state is so convinced of the rationale

of the individualization/privatization of land that the new Kenyan government has aggressively pushed the drive to have even more land privatized in an effort to realize 'development' (The Kenya Times Newspaper 13-03-2004).

### 6.2.3 The 'received wisdom' for privatization/individualization of Maasai land in Kenya

As had been mentioned earlier, to cope with unreliable environmental conditions, the pastoral Maasai had developed a flexible system of seasonal grazing and watering that maximizes the use of the range. It is this flexible system that the independent Kenyan government policies and practices have adversely impacted on in its efforts to 'bring development' to the people. As John Galaty aptly puts it:

"In the context of modernization, traditional pastoral pursuits are seen as not only archaic and conservative, but also as embarrassing and threatening to 'national development'. In the same view, pastoralists are seen not only as ignorant and conservative, but also as anti-nationalistic and reactionary" (1982: 16).

To 'modernize' the Maasai pastoral economy, major financial donors, including the World Bank, offered the government massive funding to develop the country's pastoral areas under the Kenya Livestock Development Project, administered by the then ministry of Agriculture and Animal Husbandry (Asiema and Situma 1995). As a prerequisite for loans, the World Bank demanded that registration be enacted to replace the communal land tenure system with a system that was more responsive to market forces (*ibid*).

Influential in the decision to alter land tenure was Hardin's (1968) 'tragedy of the commons' concept which argues that pastures open to all will eventually be overused and the carrying capacity of the land will inevitably be exceeded, generating tragedy through degradation and depletion, desertification, drought and disaster. This 'received wisdom' attained the status of

conventional wisdom. Hitherto, the state treated the pastoral areas as problematic because of overstocking.

“So many documents, officials and even scientists repeat the assertion of pastoral responsibility for environmental degradation that the accusation has achieved the status of a fundamental truth, so self-evident a case that marshalling evidence on its behalf is superfluous if not in fact absurd, like trying to satisfy a sceptic that the earth is round...” (Horowitz 1979, quoted in Homewood and Rodgers 1995: 112)

So influential was Hardin’s argument among academicians, development practitioners and government workers that a variety of corrective treatments were prescribed (Lenaola *et al* 1996). These prescriptions fitted well with previous late-colonial and post-independence government schemes whose goal was to settle pastoralists and introduce private property regimes. These interventions were made under the assumption that the national economy would benefit as agricultural productivity increased due to the imposition of private tenure systems and the ‘rationalization’ of the livestock economy. In effect, the pastoralists had to be “saved from themselves, for their own good” (*ibid*: 240). From postcolonial theoretical perspectives, this position resonates with the colonial government’s ‘civilizing mission’ discussed in Chapter Five. Counter-evidence however suggests otherwise. Property rights analysis now indicate that the relationship between property rights and land degradation, and the issue of tenure insecurity, is far more complex than a single argument based on the tragedy or non-tragedy of commons (Burke 2001, Galaty 1992, Galaty and Bonte 1991, Homewood 1995, Lenaola *et al* 1996) and that users are often more able to manage common resources than Hardin suggests. Social scientists attribute such degradation to external constraints such as compression due to loss of rangelands or breakdown of traditional controls under outside influence (Homewood and Rogers 1995), a situation that largely fits the Maasai predicament as colonial land alienation created problems of overstocking and overgrazing. This more recent post-Hardinian perspective recognizes the potential for ‘tragedy of the commons’, but recognizes many mitigating socio-cultural and ecological factors that Hardin ignored (Burke 2001).

Comprehensive studies carried out in Machakos District in Kenya have also for instance provided an important example of the way in which African farming methods can adapt in difficult circumstances (Tiffen and Mortimore 1992, Mortimore and Tiffen 1995, Tiffen, Mortimore and Gichuki 1994). Neo-Malthusians would have predicted the demise of Machakos many years ago given the prevailing trends: however, what the Machakos studies show is that population pressure actually positively influenced change within the District because it brought in more innovative ways of production. Boserup (1965) also argued that increasing population pressure might induce technological innovations, and also lead to scale advantages with respect to infrastructure.

The ‘tragedy of the commons’ concept is reinforced by another persistent stereotype about African pastoralists’ commitment to an irrational accumulation of livestock based upon cultural rather than economic values (Turkon 2003). This view emanated from Herskovits’ (1926) research in East Africa and he labelled it the ‘cattle complex’. In this view, pastoralists are seen as reluctant to sell cattle even in the face of hardships and emergencies. They were considered intrinsically conservative and immune to progress (Ndege 1992). Indeed, many national governments and development agencies in Africa have tended to view pastoralists in purely economic terms as;

“livestock keepers and resource managers, rather than as human agents within the context of culture and political economy, active within the multi-levelled political structures that shape economic and social life at the local, regional and national levels” (Galaty and Bonte 1991: xiv).

However, the ‘cattle complex’ has been established as an inadequate explanation, and Turkon (2003) proposes an explanation that accounts for historical developments under the political economy of the community in question. In our context, this means tracing the problem from its colonial roots. Indeed, Herskovits (1926) indicated that the data he used to justify the term ‘cattle complex’ might not have been adequate. It has actually been shown that overstocking, which was largely a colonial creation through alienation of land and restricting the sale of livestock, created a series of problems such as overgrazing and subsequent soil erosion

(Awuondo 1987, Jacob 1961, Ndege 1992). Leneman and Reid (2001) also argue that it is hard to continue to consider pastoralists to be irrational non-productive farmers since they annually produce about 75 percent of milk and 50 percent of meat in sub-Saharan Africa. In addition, Allan Jacob (1961) had earlier pointed out that the then often repeated assertion that the Maasai were unwilling to sell their cattle because it was only numbers that mattered rather than quality of cattle for a man to be accorded status, was not entirely accurate. He pointed out that this assertion disguised the fact that, in general, the Maasai were restricted from selling their cattle on a truly competitive open market. This issue has been explained more explicitly in section 5.3.3 of this thesis.

Other scholars have explained that animals play such a prominent role in social relations in many pastoral societies that in the eyes of many outsiders, this role tends to obscure their value in economic terms; “hence the suggestion that pastoralists are reluctant to part with their animals springs from socio-psychological needs” (Markakis 2004: 8). Many pastoralists however, much prefer to accumulate livestock as protection against the vagaries of nature and to accumulate ‘social capital’, which represents status and influence in their community. It is thus ironic then that,

“The notion of pastoral economic ‘irrationality’ continues to have currency in the discourse of development, where the notion is used to justify development interventions which would increase pastoral market participation. This appears to place severe constraints on the ability of poor households to regain balance within a pastoral economy” (Galaty and Bonte 1991: 9).

All in all, these criticisms were not heeded and pastoralists were encouraged to ‘modernize’ and abandon ‘traditional’ herding practices. The point here is that the rationale for government interventions in the Maasai pastoral economy, in the name of ‘development’, and which has persisted as a beacon of policy-making, was somewhat flawed from the outset. Let us now look at the specific policies and their implications.



#### *6.2.4 Subdivision of communal land into group ranches*

The subdivision of communal land into group ranches and subsequently into individual holdings in Kenya was done in the name of ‘development’ or as Gradin (1986: 10) puts it: “followed national development thrusts based on private tenure”. A radical change in the definition of property rights was therefore introduced in Maasailand. More specifically, sedentarization was seen as a ‘development objective’ (Coast 2002, Dirk 1984), with Maasailand in particular representing something of a “natural experiment in development outcomes” (Homewood 1995: 339). This has happened in response to pressure from Western theorists and World Bank economists who saw communal management as resulting in environmental mismanagement (Thomson and Homewood 2002). However, these tenure transformations have threatened the Maasai way of life (Seno and Shaw 2002).

In the early 1960s, the Mission on Land Consolidation and Registration in Kenya proposed that:

“It was out of the question, based on social, economic and practical grounds to give individual deeds to the Maasai who moved seasonally with their herds across the plains in search of pasture. Instead it proposed the establishment of group ranches” (Laws of Kenya, Revised. 1978, ch. 287, in Asiema and Situma 1995: 161).

Thus the 1968 Land (Group Representatives) Act was introduced and made it possible for a group of pastoralists to register a block of land with specific boundaries. It was hoped that this would help the pastoralists to think of herd management more in the commercial ranching sense (Eriksen and Ouko 1996) and to enhance collective effort and cooperation among the ranch members, thereby ‘pushing’ development ahead (Luseneka 1996). Ironically, group ranching was also introduced to provide a framework for dismantling communal ownership of land and nomadic pastoralism (Evangelou 1984, Galaty 1992, Gradin 1986, Rutten 1992, Seno and Shaw 2002) and to integrate the Maasai into the capitalist dominated Kenyan social formation (Dubel 1981). Thus the Maasai were to become commercial, profit-oriented cattle breeders producing for the market, making them players in the market economy and making

their production system more profitable nationally (Doherty 1989, Dubel 1981, Seno and Shaw 2002, Talle 1987, 1988). A group ranch was to be an enterprise in which a group of people jointly have a freehold title to land and aim collectively to maintain agreed stock levels, to herd collectively, but to maintain individual stock ownership (Galaty 1992, Rutten 1992).

From a postcolonial perspective, we may note here that the group ranch development policy had its ideological parallel in the previous efforts by the colonial system to encourage and strengthen the sectional boundaries (Talle 1988). The first attempt by the colonial government in Kenya to introduce a conventional ranching system resembling the contemporary group ranch was in 1949 in Kajiado District (Republic of Kenya 1990, cited in Luseneka 1996). Known at that time as 'Grazing Schemes', they were designed to run side-by-side with traditional pastoral systems and targeted semi-commercialised livestock production. They failed because of a lack of support from the people for whom the schemes were designed (Luseneka 1996). Toward the end of the colonial administration and the early years of independence, a few influential Maasai men were allocated individual ranches that were to act as models for others (*ibid*). This, however, resulted in a few Maasai getting the best parts of Maasailand, such as near Ngong (Galaty 1992, Sindiga 1984), leaving the vast majority with the more marginal areas to share out (Dirk 1984). Such elite predation of land subsequently leaves the majority of Maasai men (and, indeed, households) excluded from key resources causing major socio-economic stratification of the community. This ultimately had negative impacts on the ability of the majority to actualize their masculine potentials as the ability to raise herds were increasingly being curtailed. In addition, the *per capita* units of land for the various ranches differed greatly even when their ecological potential was relatively uniform (Helland 1980). This can also be viewed as yet another aspect of further stratification of the Maasai.

The group ranches were designed and planned by western expatriates who were 'experts' in Range Management (Gradin 1986). The design of the group ranches emphasised commercialisation of livestock herds with little regard for Maasai social values (Helland 1980). The reasons that readily influenced the Maasai to accept the group ranch concept and development were both internally and externally based. First was their desire for cattle dips and water provided in boreholes that were sunk. Secondly was the desire to secure their land against non-Maasai arable cultivators and elite Maasai who had begun to cut out chunks of communal land for themselves, with support from the administration, and also loss of the land to wildlife parks and sanctuaries (Campbell 1993, Dirk 1984, Gradin 1986, Galaty 1992, Luseneke 1996, Sindiga 1984). On the issue of the Maasai elite, Rutten (1992) reports that by 1965, 82 men had acquired individual ranches averaging 1,630 acres each. However, if the whole of Maasailand was divided between adult Maasai males, each would only get about 200 acres which was not considered viable for a single person let alone a family. Hence, once tenure was secured from outsiders and Maasai elite predation, the motivation among the Maasai to implement other changes dwiddled (Gradin 1986). All in all, many are of the view that the role played by the government and international donors in the end was the most significant driving force behind the creation of group ranches in Kajiado District. What is clear here is that the government's perceived objective of achieving 'development' through the creation of group ranches did not emerge as a response to the Maasai people's self-perceived needs.

Land titleholders were expected to get loans for agricultural development from the government's Agricultural Finance Corporation (AFC) using the titles as collateral security. The loans were earmarked for provision of livestock, water and other range infrastructures including dips, crushes, and veterinary services. The purchase of fattening steers through the AFC loans was a strategy to enhance payment of the loans borrowed (Gradin 1986, Njoka, 1979, Helland 1980). Members were to continue owning their stock individually but all the

livestock would be managed and grazed communally as a herd. The group ranches elected representatives who would be responsible for the day-to-day management of the group ranches which Buruchara and Wandera (1986) summarise as: (i) enforcing culling rates stipulated in the development plan, (ii) enforcing the grazing system worked out as in the plan, (iii) supervising the construction and maintenance of the physical facilities provided under the AFC loans for dips and boreholes and, (iv) supervising the purchase of, distribution and fattening of the steers bought on AFC loans.

However, the group ranches turned out to be a 'fiasco' (Asiema and Situma 1995: 162) for various reasons. First, group ranch boundaries did not coincide with any level of traditional socio-political organization, which were important units of livestock management among the Maasai (Eriksen and Ouko 1996, Asiema and Situma 1995). Thus existing mechanisms for resource control were disregarded (Gradin 1996). The Maasai ethnic consciousness has traditionally been associated with their sectional lands and every domestic group belonged to a local community (*enikutoto*), the formal traditional social and political organization of the Maasai, a number of which constitute the sectional lands (*oloshos*), which in turn formed the Maasai country (Kituyi 1993: 132).

In addition, the committees responsible for managing the ranches lacked any traditional legitimacy and were utterly alien to the Maasai way of life (Asiema and Situma 1995). The committees were given a wide range of functions, many of which overlapped those of 'traditional' bodies, which comprised of elders thus effectively eroding customary authority, which in itself can be seen as eroding their masculinity based on such authority. As we have noted in Chapter Five, the elders exercised control in pre-colonial Maasai society through 'managing' and 'administering' the pastoral production system. Thus the elders' appropriation of such otherwise culturally available positions of masculine power was compromised.

Some positive aspects of the group ranch concept from a Maasai point of view were the hampering of the loss of land to elite Maasai and non-Maasai migrants and the construction of bore holes, dams, troughs and cattle dips (Rutten 1997). However, this eventually led to the deterioration around settlement sites owing to concentration of livestock in such sites. Group ranch administration was another problem in the sense that initially, their management was made up of wealthy and influential individuals who were not very enthusiastic about enforcing decisions to cull excessive stock. The 'influence' of these individuals was derived from their connection with the state machinery and was not culturally based. As such we can deduce that such an arrangement inevitably interfered with Maasai 'traditional' gender organization including masculinity by enhancing the power and hegemony of a small group. Further, there were differences in investment priorities between group ranch members and the planners, who caused delays and problems in the implementation of ranch planned development programmes. Indeed, the only operation that succeeded was the registration of group ranches, thus enabling the Maasai to retain control over much of the land they occupied at independence (Luseneka 1996).

The conversion of communal land into group ranches also had more impacts on Maasai masculinity in the sense that many young and especially married men demanded their share of the land as a way of ensuring their independence from their fathers. In many group ranches however, a single age group monopolised power although they lacked 'natural' authority, which made the committees in some ranches rather weak institutions (Rutten 1992). Galaty (1992) reporting on one group ranch also indicates that "attempts to exclude a new age-set from membership led to physical conflict between old and young" (pp.29) and indeed, bloody armed clashes between Maasai men over group ranch boundaries often occurred (Rutten 1992, Galaty 1992). This can be viewed as compromising the Maasai masculine ideal of solidarity that was important in the management of their pastoral resources. Such conflicts would inevitably weaken especially the age-set based ties of sharing and solidarity

(*camaraderie*), mentioned in Chapter Four and which were important elements of their collective masculine identities.

#### 6.2.5 *Subdivision of group ranches into individual holdings*

“With the dissolution of group ranches and the individualization of land ownership, a Trojan horse entered Kajiado District” (Rutten 1992: 438).

A great deal has been written about the privatization of Maasailand through individualization of tenure (e.g. Cheeseman 2002, Fratkin, *et al* 2001, Galaty 1992, Grandin 1986, Homewood 1995, Kituyi 1990, 1993; Luseneka 1996, Rutten 1997, 1992; Gradin 1986, Seno and Shaw 2001). I consider privatization here because it is of primary importance in the understanding of contemporary marginalization of the Masai people and thus has impacted greatly on Maasai masculinities. In the 1970s, there were increasing calls for group ranch sub-division citing the need to have a title as collateral for agricultural loans and generally the poor performance of the group ranches. The members of the group ranches were quoted as being unhappy with poor range management, lack of individual title deeds, and the burden of loan repayment (Rutten 1992). Another strong factor leading to dissolution of group ranches is the assumption at the initiation of ranching development that the Maasai were uniform, and homogenous, all with the same status and prospects as a community. As we saw in Chapter Four, even in the precolonial context, Maasai society had some degree of internal differentiation such as in wealth and status. In addition, the allocation of grazing quotas based on the number of stock held at the time of the group ranch registration was totally alien to the Maasai. Initially, the government opposed the idea of subdividing group ranches arguing that the semi-arid regions were ecologically and economically unsuitable for small individual ranches (Gradin 1986).

However, in the 1980s, again with encouragement from World Bank and international development agencies, Kenya titled most of the common land in the semi arid regions. The

main turning point was in 1986, when a Presidential Decree on the Land (Group Representatives) Act was issued. This allowed for sub-division of group ranches into individual plots thus allowing private owners (holding freehold titles) to move in (Luseneka 1996). However many of these private owners were often well-connected persons (mainly politically) who made deals with group representatives, “who in the process often obtained a good plot of land for themselves” (Benschop 2002: 149). This can be viewed as yet another way in which the Maasai community was further being socially and economically stratified thus leading to the marginalization of even more people.

An important aspect of this process, in the context of this thesis, is that ownership of these now individualized parcels was vested primarily in the male head of the family, who “holds property rights that includes the right to lease or sell parcels of the former ranch to outsiders” (Seno and Shaw 2002: 80). Indeed, more than 99 percent of the group ranch members were men (Talle 1988). These policies can thus be seen as reinforcing men’s power by enhancing their control over what is implicitly meant to be family land. This control has led to many men selling the family land leaving their family and themselves destitute. This, as we shall see in sub-section 6.3.2.1, can be read as a manifestation of a crisis of masculinity.

The subdivision of land into individual holdings also had more gendered implications among Maasai men as conflicts between Maasai men of different generations again arose from attempts by elders to exercise power in the community during the subdivision. The older age-sets of the elders, who were overrepresented in the lists of group ranch membership, attempted to prevent the following generations (young men) from getting shares as the group ranches were being subdivided. This seems to mirror what Vijayan (2002: 35) refers to as “a renewed deployment of the idea of patriarchy as a masculine hegemony”. Rutten (1992) for example reports that the non-registered youngsters who wanted to attend group ranch meetings on subdivision were not allowed to do so. In some instances, they were told to;

“go to a tall nearby tree and build their house on top, even as the Maasai has a saying that ‘non can live like a bird, on a branch’” (Peron 1984, cited in Rutten 1992: 438).

Essentially this meant subordination of younger Maasai men and the reinforcement of economic stratification. Galaty (1992) also reports that in many instances those close to the heart of decision-making gained individual portions far larger than would have been their share had the allocation been made on equitable principles. In addition many outsiders who were not local residents and in many cases unknown to the residents gained large pieces of land through dubious means (*ibid*). This again led to a situation where many Maasai men were marginalized (by being disempowered in terms of control over land resources), with the attendant implications for their masculinity. Again, as we have thus far noted power (or lack of it) is of central concern to the theory of hegemonic masculinities. Increased sedentarization has been associated with livestock losses through drought, creation of boundaries on formally expansive grazing land, and monetization of the pastoral economy (Coast 2002: 263). The most obvious effect of subdivision is increased stratification and the development of landless peoples (Rutten 1992), as the well-to-do buy out poor farmers. This latter issue is of paramount importance to this study and is dealt with more concretely and exhaustively in section 6.3.4 of this chapter. Wildlife conservation is yet another policy that has led to more loss of Maasai land, wildlife-human conflict and the attendant marginalisation and consequences to gender and masculinities. These issues are discussed below.

#### *6.2.6 Wildlife conservation and the Maasai*

This section will show that the state’s wildlife conservation policies have had effects on Maasai livelihoods and lifestyles and subsequently masculinity. A connection is also drawn between the concerns of postcolonialism and issues of wildlife conservation and tourism. During the colonial period, the Maasai lost fifteen percent of their total land area (the area they had occupied since they were moved to create colonial settlements) through alienation of land for exclusive wildlife habitation (Sindiga 1994). This trend continued even after independence. Prior to independence, Kenya had 4 national parks and 6 game reserves. By



the end of last century, it boasted twenty national parks, 26 six national reserves, plus a number of game sanctuaries and nature reserves, occupying no less than 7.5 percent of its total land area (Markakis 2004: 11). This decision to keep people, and in our case the Maasai, out of wildlife areas is another administrative policy that has further diminished their access to land. Again, this has commonly been justified on the argument that pastoralists' livestock overgrazes and damages their ranges, while wildlife are perceived as existing in harmony with their surroundings (Homewood and Rodgers 1995). In general, wildlife conservation was also made within the rhetoric of 'development'. As we also saw in Chapter Two a major concern of postcolonialism is to map out colonial continuities into post-colonial times. David Collett problematises the justifications set out in support of National Parks and Game Reserves policies and convincingly illustrates the continuities of colonial policies. It thus fits to quote him at length:

"The disparate justifications set out in support of National Parks and Game Reserves policies may seem obvious enough in the desirability of conserving species, or of encouraging a lucrative tourist industry, but it is important to acknowledge the fact that the present policies represent the imposition of an essentially European view of how pastoral areas should be 'managed'. Under colonial government, wildlife policy in the pastoral areas was closely bound up with the broader aims of the 'development' process. In this respect, colonial images of pastoral societies were not without prejudices; they were influenced by dominant European perception of how land should be best utilized, and by how European attitudes towards wildlife and its 'natural environment'. These images not only shaped colonial policies in the pastoral areas, but were subsequently inherited and largely accepted by the independent states in East Africa in the 1960s (Collett 1995: 129-130).

Indeed, preservation of wildlife had long been a concern of the colonial administration and areas of Kajiado District had been included in the Southern Game Reserve as early as 1910 (Campbell 1993). The creation of National Parks and Game Reserves can thus be seen as part of the wider redefinition of space and land use introduced by the colonial administration and which continues to have impacts today. Cheeseman (2002) for instance argues that the paternalistic attitude initiated by colonial state has since pervaded Kenyan wildlife conservation sector. Elsewhere, Brockington (2002) argues that the dominant approach to wildlife conservation in Africa has more to do with Western views of the environment than

with what is appropriate for African people and herds. He focuses on the Tanzanian government's decision to evict people and cattle from the Mkomazi Game Reserve in 1988, but he also considers damaging, harmful, and unjust conservation efforts across the continent. As noted in section 5.3.1, the development of game reserves was seen as strengthening the notion of service as a constitutive part of white colonial masculinity. Thus the negative impacts of wildlife conservation can be seen as part of the wider subjugation of the Maasai masculinities by colonial masculinities.

With the passing of the National Parks Ordinance in 1945 the colonial state gazetted a series of national and game reserves in and near Maasailand and it is estimated that the total area lost by the Maasai to game was more than 5987 sq km. (Sindiga 1984, Campbell 1993). Indeed, some of the most popular tourist parks are located within the borders of Maasailand and these areas enclosed water and pasture resources which had formerly been used as dry-season areas by the Maasai (Campbell 1993). The uncompensated establishment of parks in Maasailand and the lack of compensation for wildlife damages on people living around parks caused severe antagonism early in the history of Kenyan conservation (Cheeseman 2002). After independence, a system of compensation for damages and revenue sharing was enacted. The former has been inconsistent and at times ceased altogether while the latter has fallen prey to a lack of accountability, leaving those whose grazing rights were taken with no compensation (*ibid*). Yet even as national parks are major income earners for the state, Kajiado people have not benefited from them (Sindiga 1993). We may also note that tourism provides Kenya with thirty percent of its foreign exchange earnings (Markakis 2004). Thus while the local people bear the cost of tourism development and wildlife conservation, they in turn receive insignificant direct monetary benefits. It has been estimated that only between two percent and five percent of Kenya's tourism receipts trickles down to the populace at the grassroots levels (Akama 2004). Although Kenya earns thirty percent of its foreign exchange from mainly wildlife

tourism, it has been noted that most of the money made from this industry ends up in the West with relatively little of it going to the Kenyan economy, let alone to the Maasai. Perhaps that was the idea when the colonial government set aside Maasai land into 'conservation' areas after all. This further represents a continuity of colonial exploitation and elaborates the contention by Hall and Tucker (2004: 6) that:

"In terms of the relationships between the former colonizers and the colonized, it is apparent that a substantial legacy continues to exist with respect to political economy that clearly may have relevance for the pattern and nature of tourism development".

Indeed, it has been estimated that over sixty percent of Kenya's tourist industry is under foreign ownership and management (Akama 2004). The following comment by an elderly male respondent in my study further exemplifies this point and shows the disillusionment he has about this state of affairs as he justifies the 'illegal' grazing of Maasai livestock during a drought period:

"The increase in the number of cattle in the park is not accidental. Clearly, the local communities do not share in the tourism benefits. Few are employed there, and only as guards or junior hotel workers. Foreigners occupy the top jobs with big salaries. In other words, the profits accruing from the parks do not benefit our people" (RM 81).

Clearly then, expelling local populations through gazettement of parks and reserves means that their rights inherent in traditional land use are lost along with the right even to live on it! It is no wonder that the tourism industry has been said to be "crushing the Maasai" (The East African Newspaper 16-10 - 03). The provision in the constitution that "...no right, interest or other benefit under African customary law shall have effect...so far as it is repugnant to any written law" ensures that previous norms and rules lose their effect (Section 115 (2) of Kenyan constitution, cited in Ericksen and Ouko 1996). The effect of this exclusion in the park became evident during the droughts of 1953 and again between 1972-76 when the Maasai suffered many livestock losses, but the long-term implications were such that, even in the absence of drought, pressure on resources began to reach critical levels in the 1980s (Campbell 1993). With increased human numbers, the situation today has become even more critical. Talle (1988) also indicates that the alienation of these vital dry season pastures resulted in a decrease in the relative number of cattle per household, thus increasing poverty.

It is also estimated that the number of wild animals outside the protected areas in Kenya, including Maasailand, range from 65 to 80 percent of the total wildlife numbers in the country (Ericksen and Ouko 1996). Thus, wildlife not only exists in game reserves and national parks but throughout Maasailand leading to especially stiff competition between Maasai livestock and wild ungulates for range resources particularly during the dry season when the latter are critically short in supply. Indeed, many of my respondents complained that wildlife traversed their land while they are not allowed to graze their livestock in the nearby Nairobi National Park even in times of environmental distress such as drought. I witnessed the presence on Maasai land of large numbers of these ungulates mainly zebras and various species of antelopes during my fieldwork period especially as the dry season set in toward the end of the month of October 2003. This shows that the wild animals not only utilize the range resources in the parks, which the Maasai have been excluded from, but also the meagre resources that the Maasai were left with. In addition, unlike cattle, these wild ungulates are able to move long distances quickly and graze throughout the night (Jacob 1965). Thus, in competition for scant dry season grazing, they commonly outmanoeuvre livestock and consume much of the better pasture which otherwise would be available for cattle.

Generally, the local communities are not adequately consulted before gazettement of parks and reserves is effected (Ogolla and Mugabe 1996). Indeed, park protection has come from the government in a top-down impositional manner (Cheeseman 2002) meaning that the voices and opinions of the Maasai have been marginalized. With the reduction in size of land available both wildlife and the pastoralists and their livestock have had their traditional range reduced, thus conflicts arise from the competition for the diminishing range. This human-wildlife conflict, as it is commonly referred to, is defined as a situation where use by human and wildlife affect or are perceived to affect each other in a negative way (Ogolla and Mugabe 1996). The extent to which these interactions cause conflict reflects increasing pressure for utilization of these resources in a restricted area, or decreased compatibility in uses (Ericksen

and Ouko 1996). Conflicts take the form of illegal or excessive human use of protected areas or resources, and land use practices outside the protected area. These conflicts reflect people's interest in utilizing the resources of protected areas which are being denied them. Other conflicts occur when wildlife affect other land uses when they move out of the protected areas and consequently undermine people's livelihoods. In my research site of Kisaju, I came across a number of men who were illegally selling ostrich eggs, which are quite abundant during certain times of the year. They claimed that they were doing so to make ends meet, said one man, showing me one of the eggs,

*"Hii ni mali yangu, (this is my wealth), I collected it in my farm since wild ostriches laid them there. Even in the shambas (i.e. private official farms) of the rich they are doing the same. So, why not me?" (RM 34).*

When resources are alienated due to government owned wildlife on private farms e.g. crop raiding, killing of domestic animals by predators, transmission of diseases and competition for pastures, compensation is not available. My respondents reported that the killing of their herds especially by lions and hyenas was quite prevalent in Kisaju and nearby villages. Indeed, during my research period in 2003, there was a major conflict between the Maasai and the government as lions from the nearby Nairobi National Park had got out of the park and killed many Maasai cattle. The Maasai initially threatened to kill a lion for every one of their cattle killed. The government minister in charge of wildlife conservation in turn threatened them with prosecution. Around June/July 2003, a group of Maasai 'warriors' (as they were referred to) made good their threat by hunting down and spearing 10 lions from the Nairobi National Park to avenge the death of their livestock (The Sunday Nation Newspaper 05-10-03, The East African Standard Newspaper 06-10-03). It was not until the Maasai took this action that the said minister moderated his approach by calling for diplomacy and 'promising' some compensation. The Maasai cited, for their action, the perpetual failure of the government to compensate them for their killed animals in the past. In an informal group discussion after this incidence, one of them bitterly complained that:

*"When one lion is killed, the Government wants to prosecute us but when many of our animals are killed, nothing is done to compensate us" (RM 19).*

In addition, some people have been badly maimed rendered unable to fend for themselves. A lot of concern has been expressed over the absence or low levels of compensation offered by Kenya Wildlife Services (KWS) for damage of property and loss of lives caused by wildlife (Kenya 2001). Indeed the compensation for human life for death resulting from attack by wildlife is a meagre Ksh 30,000, which was equivalent to slightly more than £ 200 according to August 2004 exchange rates (The Daily Nation Newspaper 09-08-2004). More often than not payments are not made.

Thus in the absence of an efficient compensation system, property owners bordering wildlife areas are left on their own to bear the cost of maintaining wildlife on their land. Ironically, it is claimed that the aim of wildlife conservation is to promote the sustainable management of the resource base for the good of the public (Erickson and Ouko 1996). The point here is that the government policy of wildlife conservation on the present and former Maasailand has led to the further marginalization of men. It has a constraining effect on their abilities to actualize their masculine ideals since their ability to become 'people of cattle' and contributing in the provisioning for their families is curtailed. Thus by killing the lions as in the above incidence, the Maasai were in a way contesting the subjugation of their masculinity. On another note, such conflicts with lions, 'by default', avail a chance for the Maasai men to reclaim a traditionally important space for demonstrating their masculinity, as killing such predatory lions by a *moran* was for long a culturally exalted masculine act of bravery. It is probably no wonder then that in the above incident, the Maasai disposed of the lions using the 'traditional' lion-hunt (*olamayio*) method i.e. using their long spears and hunting dogs (see figure 6.1).



Maasai herdsman armed with spears and their dogs on the hunt for lions after their livestock were killed in the Kitengela area of Kajiado District: Ti conflict has intensified in the past few months with several lions killed in retaliation.

Figure 6.1: Lion hunt: source, The Sunday Nation Newspaper 05-10-2003.

Naomi Kipuri (1979), a Maasai academician, indicates that 'traditionally', Maasai males had some unique ritual ornaments some of which were part of their material culture items that symbolized bravery, a celebrated aspect of Maasai *moranhoo*d masculinity. Among them was the lion headdress (*olowuaru*) worn by a brave *moran* who has gone for a lion hunt (*olamayio*), speared and killed the lion or grabbed it by the tail before it died (Kipuri 1979). Jacob (1965) also indicates that the *moran* who laid down his spear and grabbed the lion by the tail while others speared it won much praise and status. The cultural availability of such prestige has now been limited by state policy. This is because the hunting of game, including lions, has been banned in Kenya since the late 1970s (The Sunday Nation Newspaper 05-10-03). This makes the construction of masculinity associated with bravery during lion hunts effectively outlawed, yet again reducing the masculine space available to the Maasai.

The lions' manes and ostrich feathers were used for making warriors' headdresses and spear covers. The wearing of such lion headdresses, a much valued masculine act, is no longer

tenable. The same goes for the wearing of decorative leg bands by warriors made from colobus monkey skin. Moreover, in the past, the Maasai exchanged cattle with Wandorobo hunters (a neighbouring hunting community), in order to acquire rhinoceros horns to be made into clubs or *olkuma-narok* ‘gavels’, and presented by each age-set to their local *laigwenani* (spokesman) (Jacobs 1965). Such spokesmen occupied prestigious power positions in the masculine structure of the Maasai that, as we have seen, was organized around the age-sets. Today, the rhino is a highly protected animal in Kenya and is classified as one of the most endangered species in the country, thus access to their horns is not only hard but also illegal. In this section, I have shown that the state policy of alienating land for wildlife conservation, the resultant human-wildlife conflicts, and the outlawing of hunting has resulted among others in compromising the Maasai livestock production strategies, and the attendant demasculinizing consequences. In the next section we turn our focus on contemporary gender dynamics in the study sites.

### **6.3 Land and Contemporary Gender Dynamics in Kisaju**

In this section, I discuss land and contemporary gender dynamics in Kisaju village. Kisaju is inhabited by Maasai who were evacuated by the colonial administration from their Northern pasturelands in 1912 in order to make way for a ‘White Highland’ area (Jacobs 1965). The topography of the village is relatively flat and undulating with the western end bounded by small hills. This section starts by presenting some broad socio-economic aspects of Kisaju residents followed by more specific issues of land and gender.

#### *6.3.1 Socio-economic aspects of the respondents in Kisaju Village*

In this section I discuss some of the indicators of modernization in Kisaju village from the analysis of the survey data (quantitative). Results from the analysis of these socio-economic



data indicate that the majority (94 percent) of the respondents (household heads) were male while the average age was about forty years. This suggests a predominance of male headed family arrangements and in the context of this study it implies that the masculine ideal of men as the ‘controllers/providers’ of their respective households may be predominant. The majority (about 88 percent) were married with the rest being either single or windowed. As for religious affiliations majority (89 percent) indicated they were Christian and the rest Maasai ‘traditional’ religion. Indeed, there were five Christian denominational churches in the village namely, Catholic, Church of the Province of Kenya (CPK-Anglican), Pentecostal Church of East Africa (PCEA-Presbyterian), African Inland Church (AIC), and Seventh Day Adventist. This indicates that Christian religion has penetrated the area at the expense of the Maasai ‘traditional’ religion, which they have practised for a long time. This has some implications for our study as some Christian ideals may have consequences for gender relations and the expressions of masculinities, as for instance the requirement of a monogamous family which runs counter to the Maasai cultural masculine ideal of polygamy mentioned Chapter Four. Some respondents felt that there was competition among the various denominations for members that was not healthy. One of my key respondents (a retired civil servant) indicated that the existence of many churches brought about divisions and even enmity between members of various denominations:

“Christianity has corrupted our society – bringing division and hatred. There is lots of politics in churches...members of one church do not like members of the other...they think theirs is the true one. Many now see themselves as first Christians with their own denominations, and then Maasai. This spoils the communal spirit of the Maasai and divides us” (CRM 19).

In terms of educational attainment, 64 percent of the respondents were illiterate, 21 percent had attained primary school level education, 4 percent secondary and 9 percent had tertiary education. As was noted in section 5.3.5, colonialism left a legacy of unequal access to education, which has in turn created wide disparities in participation in the apparatus of the state and the national economy and in the formal private sector. The Maasai in particular have been greatly disadvantaged in this respect (Kenya 2001, Gorham 1988, 1987, Tignor 1939).

One young man who had just finished his high school shows in his comment how hard it can be even to get the education:

“I completed secondary school this year (2003). I come from a poor family and had a lot of problems in school fees payment. I was only able to complete my education because the County Council of Kajiado, and the Kajiado North Constituency Bursary Fund assisted me” (RM 14).

Education levels are a key component of current and future human capital as Coast (2002) points out. This low level of literacy has implications for this study in the sense that illiterates are disadvantaged in terms of securing better paying jobs in the public and private sectors. In the recent Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper consultative meetings for Kajiado District, unemployment was cited by the residents as a major contributing factor to high poverty levels in the district (2001). Indeed, the high unemployment levels in Kajiado District have been attributed to limited employment opportunities as a result of high illiteracy levels coupled with inadequate technical skills (*ibid*). A study by Galaty (1992) carried out soon after subdivision of land into individual holdings in Kajiado showed that those with no education were much more likely to sell their land than those with some education. Likewise, those who were unemployed were also found to be more likely to sell their land than the employed. The situation today seems only to have worsened. Many of my respondents felt that lack of jobs was a major problem especially for the younger generation who may have gone to school to a certain level but the knowledge and skills they acquired could not guarantee them desirable jobs. Like many so-called ‘developing countries’, Kenya’s economy is weak. As such many graduates are now increasingly finding themselves jobless. This has particular ramifications for the Maasai who had not secured jobs in relatively better times owing to the unequal access to education cited above. One of the very few University graduates in Kisaju laments:

“I am a social worker with Compassion International (Kenya). I hold a B.Sc Degree in Agricultural Engineering but had to take up a job in community work because there is no relevant employment available. Corruption has led to more unemployment. We were only two in this location with B.Sc but one was employed and I was left. Thus I had to seek alternative survival in social work. And I even had to work as a volunteer for two years before I could get this job!” (RM 36)

As for family size, 62 percent of the households had between 4 and 7 persons with the largest family having 26 persons and the smallest having 2, and an average of 6.7 persons per household. This also implies a relatively high level of dependency. This again makes it increasingly difficult for the household heads, who are mainly men, to provide for their dependants thereby undermining their sense of manliness.

### 6.3.3 *'The nightmare of landless pastoralists': gender and land issues in Kisaju*

Kisaju village has undergone the land reforms discussed and is experiencing a number of problems emanating directly or indirectly from these policies. The village was part of Kisaju/Kipeto group ranch and part of the third phase of the subdivision of communal land into group ranches in Kajiado District that began in 1979 (Rutten 1992, Luseneka, 1996). Issues of land ownership and access have shaped the recent history of Kisaju, and fragmentation and parcelization of land appear to have reached a critical stage, as my informants confirmed. Thus the nightmare of landless pastoralists, which lay over the horizon (Galaty 1992), seems now to have made its appearance. Between 1984 and the early 1990s, Rutten (1992) indicates that 25 five Kisaju residents had sold at least 2,490 acres of land;

“On average Kisaju farmers originally owned some 350 acres. Almost 30% of the original plot size has been sold by this group within a period of 6 years. The majority of the buyers were of non-Maasai origin and included land buying companies, women’s groups a teachers union, rich politicians, civil servants and businessmen (*ibid*: 300).

Certainly, this does not appear to match the government’s claim to bring ‘development’ to Maasailand. This suggests a conspiracy whose aim has been to wrestle such land, which is close to the capital city of Nairobi from communal ownership to private ownership by means of market mechanisms, and to, “theoretically put the lands in the hands of those ‘most suited to using it effectively’” (Galaty 1992: 27). In this respect it should also be mentioned that the process of stratification of land ownership in Kisaju also involves a significant amount of land purchased for purely speculative or asset purposes, carrying with it a low degree of land

utilization. Kisaju for instance has been referred to as the ‘presidential place’ because of the many high and mighty political and other national elites who have bought and enclosed big parcels of land in the village.

As indicated earlier in this chapter, the title of ownership to land was normally issued to the senior male household member. Thus the influence of gender relations situated within discourses that position such men as owners, controllers, deciders and providers, lingers. Indeed, the majority (93 percent) of the questionnaire respondents indicated that it is only men who should inherit land while the rest were of the opinion that both women and men should inherit. Related to this, only 16 percent knew of anyone who had passed land on to daughters while 83 percent did not know of any. This can be seen as an example of promoting the gender ideology of male hegemony and therefore power over women, as Kimmel (1999: 62) has it “power, indeed, is the key term while referring to hegemonic masculinities”.

Upon the subdivision and registration of titles, cases of men selling their plots of land without consulting their families have increased. It has actually been shown that land liberalisation in Africa is inflicting ‘collateral damage’ on women (Manji 2003). This sale of land has encouraged both land fragmentation and reduction of the size of landholdings. These men often take the money and move to Nairobi and other urban areas, leaving their families homeless and landless. This was reported to be an issue of great concern by many respondents especially because it has led to the destitution of many families:

“Land subdivision has brought good and bad changes. Many men sell their land and engage in drinking and having prostitutes and even getting AIDS. On the other hand, the wise use their small parcels well” (RM 3).

“Subdivision of land has led to men’s quarrels as each brother wants a share. Some want bigger shares because they are the older ones or because they belong to the elder wife. So this problem of land is very big ...some have fought over it, others are going to the court” (RM 5).

Yet others explained that:

“Many heads of households sell their land slowly, piece by piece and eventually become landless. They are attracted by the sweet life of town. They sell a piece, go to town, marry new wives who are *wajuaji* (sly), eat all the money, come back and sell another piece, until all is sold...very bad. If this is *maendeleo* (development), it is better if Maasai remain *wajinga* (ignorant) than what is happening now” (RM 81).

Other cases of land sales were however different as sales were made to rescue relatively desperate situations, as in the cases of old men, with big families to provide for:

“I have three wives and nineteen children. But I experienced a knee injury many years ago. I am therefore not able to do any work that is of benefit to the family. About 10 years ago, after my herd of cattle was wiped by drought, I started depending on land sales. Every year, I sell about four acres of land to meet family needs, including children’s education fees. In the year of 2000, I bought a vehicle and gave it to my son to do business. But it is of no benefit to me because my son is eating the little money that comes from it” (RM 46).

“I am a farmer who depends on animals only. I have also sold some portion of my land because of poverty in my family. During the drought of the year 2000 all the cattle I had then perished after I migrated to Emali to look for grass. I therefore had to sell part of my land to buy others. My two wives depend on me for provision of basic needs (MR 47).

For these men their perceived masculine duties of providing for their families made them sell their land. However, what actually prompted them to sell in many instances was drought since the range resources cannot adequately support their herds. This is yet more evidence of the collapsing pastoral system due to the effects of the changes occurring around them, especially restricted grazing rights.

The government has actually acknowledged that the individual land tenure system has increased the rate of land sale to non-Maasai especially in Ngong Division owing to its close proximity to the capital city of Nairobi (Kenya 2002), which can be said to be the focal point of modernization in Kenya. It has not however come up with an effective policy to deal with the issue. The requirement that land should not be sold without the consent of the immediate family members has not been effective enough due to corruption involving the Land Boards which have the responsibility of enforcing this policy and those who wish to sell their land.

In addition, population growth, coupled with other factors such as the right of siblings to inherit land is contributing to extreme parcelization and fragmentation of land. Traditionally, Maasai people did not consider land as a commodity and therefore did not transfer it to offsprings. The Maasai simply inherited the right to graze livestock in an area as members of their community and thus had no precedent for the importance of intergenerational land ownership (Seno and Shaw 2002). This continuous fragmentation through the generations is resulting in even more uneconomical parcels with declining productivity. This forces most people to seek alternative approaches to securing a livelihood because the holding is too small to support the family. As noted in section 7.1, more often than not, crop cultivation (in the form of rain-fed agriculture) as an alternative means of livelihood is not a very rewarding enterprise owing to the adverse climatic conditions prevalent in the area. Thus to many residents a more viable alternative is to sell part or the whole parcel of land.

Studies by Rutten (1992) and Klinken (1992) among the Maasai indicate that the arbitrary sale of land is also attributed to ‘their love for livestock’ rather than owning land. In any case, since ‘traditionally’ land was not private but communal property, the Maasai had not traditionally come up with rules regarding the disposal of land. This is a phenomenon without precedence. Many residents in Kisaju also reported that part of the proceeds from land sales are often used to restock. This creates a kind of vicious circle as often, the interest of the seller is to obtain more stock and non-food items. We have already shown how livestock has traditionally been a very important aspect of Maasai identity and more specifically masculine identity to the extent that they referred to themselves as ‘the people of cattle’. The selling of land to buy cattle (a gendered status symbol) can then be seen as an attempt at reclaiming their identity lost during the frequent droughts. Over time, the individual ranch becomes too small to sustain the increased herd, a situation that now pertains for many households in Kisaju. Yet, ironically, privatization was meant to achieve higher interest and investment of the individual in the resources on the land and livestock and subsequently higher returns.

It is also important to point out that not all men who sold their land were from poor families. In addition, there were cases where land was sold at the instigation of women/wives and money used for 'pleasure' by the partners. In the first place, the most 'dramatic' cases of land sales were reported among the sons of the relatively rich after inheriting from their fathers. The most tragic and moving case was the story of a man who had been nicknamed The Mercedes Man because he was allegedly the first person to purchase a Mercedes Benz personal car in Kisaju Village. His case kept cropping up whenever the issue of land sales came up. Briefly, he is said to have inherited between four and five hundred acres of land in a relatively prime area since it was close to the main road and was in high demand from buyers. This is probably what Katherine Homewood had in mind when she pointed out that privatization of land has provided the means whereby land can be, "prised away from pastoralist control" (1995: 338). After gaining his title deed, he started selling his land bit by bit, 100 acres, 100 acres, 50 acres until the land was completely finished. Finally, only the house and the land it was on remained. He then started selling furniture and eventually the house. Before he sold the last acres, his wife together with the children left (to her father's homestead). With his Mercedes (a great status symbol among the Kenya elite), he was reputed as a generous drunkard and great womaniser. As will be discussed in more details in Chapter Nine, the possession of a motor vehicle, drinking and buying beer for others are attributes that have gained currency in the contemporary construction of Maasai masculinity. In her study, Kandiyoti (1994) also found that men's pre-occupation with their masculinity compelled them to try and maintain their community status by holding on to symbolic gestures of manliness such as entertaining friends lavishly. What all this suggests is that masculinity or manliness is less comprehensibly advantageous to men than might be assumed. Back (2001) also indicates that in particular social contexts, registrations of masculinity are not only complex and multiple but also contradictory. The patriarchal advantages as in the

above cases of men having the family land under their control may in itself be a liability not only to their families but also to themselves.

By the time I started my research, he was a desolate man working as a part-time driver and a person of no fixed abode who often depended on the goodwill of others for food and shelter. My attempts to interview him were fruitless as he always insisted that he had no time. One day during the last month of my research, a convoy of about four vehicles snaked into the village and my research assistant informed me that it was the funeral procession of the Mercedes-man. He had died from a 'suspicious disease', as my research assistant and others later would insinuate or even point out. The drama of the Mercedes Man story aside, many other tragic instances of Maasai men who had sold their land and followed relatively similar life trajectories are commonplace. Since such instances were not recorded before privatization of land, to an extent then, the state policies stand accused. I do not deny the agency of the sellers, but I also insist that government policies are implicated in the matter. Michael Kimmel suggests that in times of social and economic transformations, "small farmers and independent peasants 'traditionally' stake their notions of masculinity in ownership of land" (2002: xii). This is what seems to be happening among the Maasai as their socio-economic structures crumble around them.

#### 6.3.3.1 Women and the issue of land sales

The issue of land sales occasioned by the subdivision of land has had diverse impacts on women. The following short life history of a Maasai woman respondent in Kisaju village serves to exemplify the point:

"I got married when I was a young girl according to our culture at that time. There was no going to school then, and girls were booked at even the age of two years. Even sometimes, they were booked when in the womb, should she be a girl. Girls were married immediately after being initiated. I was 'booked' by my husband at an early age. When we got married he later joined the army. Initially we were rich because we had two big plots of land and lots of livestock. .... My husband daily came back from Army barracks very drunkard. We quarrelled because he wanted to sell the land. He



managed to sell one of the plots and then chased me away... to parents home. When I reported the case to parents they warned my husband and talked to him. The land was sold at a throwaway price. We had then one remaining piece of land. The money from the sale of the land was used for drinking throughout his leave days. We were left home, hungry and unclothed. '*Alikimbia nyumbani miezi tatu!*' (he ran away from home for three months!) and 'drank' all the money in Kitengela and Nairobi. He was sacked because of his drunkenness. When the money was finished, he again wanted to sell the other piece. When I refused, he beat me a lot and tried to chase me away but this time I declined completely. He set ablaze the two houses at home. I had to sell all the livestock to get money to retain the title deed. Even now there is no cow. We depend on my beadwork. He now depends on '*vibarua*' (casual jobs) to get money for drinking. He does not even care about his children" (RF 32).

Owing to such dispossessions, many women have taken up the role of providing for their families thus shouldering most of the burden of provisioning for the family as the account of Mama Sainaka, a middle-aged woman illustrates:

"My main work is making bead items and selling them. I sell the beads in Mombasa seasonally. I have to do this work to provide for my two children. Our big portion of land was sold and all livestock sold by my husband. I now have only a few animals, which I have bought myself. The land was sold at a throwaway price. He built a stone house and bought a vehicle which he later sold at a throw away price. Now we live only where the house is built" (RF 42).

However, in a number of instances the decision to sell land and 'have a good time' on the money had been made by both husband and wife:

"But in some cases, it is the wives who are also a contributing factor – they push their husbands to sell because they want to 'eat easy money' or they want to invest elsewhere" (35 RF).

There was however a contention that generally where women were involved in the sale of land money was more likely to be used well. As a respondent said: "Widows have also sold their lands but they don't misuse the money like men" (RF 48). This suggests that there are some normative pressures on men to get money and prove their masculinity by for instance buying beer lavishly.

As suggested earlier, local and colonial legacy economic practices have established and maintained gendered ideologies that structure material opportunities differently for men and women. We have seen that women were almost never registered as group ranch members,

since the husband was assumed as representing the whole family during the registration exercise. When a woman was registered as a member, it was because she was a widow and her sons were too young to be registered (Benschop 2002). Very rarely was a single woman registered. This shows that the titling of customary land has left women in more vulnerable positions and has led to their exclusion and impoverishment.

Another practise, though it is yet to become widespread, is where some women, especially those who have gained formal employment, are beginning to fight this exclusion by buying their own land, which is registered under their names. This can be seen as an attempt by women to overcome the constraints on their access to resources brought about by the prevailing hegemonic masculine ideals mentioned above. As mentioned earlier, it was only in exceptional cases that a woman was registered in group ranches in her individual capacity as a member e.g. in the case of a woman who had never married but has borne children which she brought up in her father's home, or a childless widow or divorcee (Talle 1988). Talle had speculated that single women, being excluded from access to land, would face severe problems in future within the pastoral economy. One woman, a school-teacher in a nearby school and a single parent explained that:

“In my community most men still think that women should not own land and so it is only men who should inherit land. So I decided to buy this piece of land because of my future and that of my children. People who will have land in this place in future will benefit a lot because Nairobi is expanding. That is why you see so many non-Maasai people from Nairobi buying land here. They can see the future” (CRF 40).

In her household this woman has positioned herself as the provider thus appropriating some local masculine ideals. As will be shown even more clearly later in Chapter Seven, many women are now increasingly becoming the main providers for their families even where the man is still the ‘symbolic’ head of the household but is unable to live up to the ideal of being the main provider for one reason or other.

All in all, the problem of land sales was depicted as mainly a man's problem. Thus the government's tenure policies can be said to have also resulted in problems for men, they sell land to buy 'modern' goods such as cars and partake of 'modern' lifestyles. Land has become a commodity which they can sell, using the proceeds to carve out "new ways of being a man, associated with worldly sophistication", as Andrea Cornwall (2003: 237) suggests. In some instances, they try to reclaim their 'traditional' identity as 'people of cattle' through unviable means i.e. selling land to buy cattle which cannot be supported by the now diminishing land resources and are thus frequently wiped out by drought. To borrow words from Rutten (1992), they have 'sold wealth to buy poverty'. In the final analysis, many fall out of accepted masculine positions, as they become socially dislocated with the disappearance of their material basis of authority. The argument here is that, as a result of land sales, many men can barely, if at all, provisioning for their families. This is ultimately one way the contemporary crisis of masculinity among the Maasai is manifesting itself. This will become clearer as we move to the subsequent chapters of this thesis.

#### 6.3.3.2 Land still used as pastoral common...to an extent

Other than the issue of land sales, another issue that merits some discussion here is the fact that, contrary to the government expectations, most Maasai, to some extent, continue treating their land as pastoral commons with generally open areas for fellow Maasai especially in times of environmental distress. This way, they maintain their traditional reciprocal relationships with their nearby and distant relatives and friends. It is an attitude of 'help me today and I will help you tomorrow' i.e. today's host(s) may have been hosted earlier by the present guest(s). These relationships are among men and can be viewed as an enduring aspect of their expression of 'collective masculinity' ideal expressed in solidarity and generosity for the mutual good. This is an extremely important survival strategy without which any livestock-keeping would probably be impossible to sustain. I observed and discussed these movements with the respondents. For example, during the first week of December 2003, many

cattle were moved from the lower part of Kisaju that had been hit by drought, to various parts with pasture and water. Locally, rainfall is highly variable both in spatial and temporal terms. The upper part of Kisaju, which had received relatively more rainfall, was then too congested because many people had moved their stock earlier especially in November from some parts of lower Kisaju and neighbouring villages. This information shows that Maasai continue to manage their livestock largely on 'traditional' lines despite what Homewood (1995: 339) calls 'development inputs'. It can also be read as a postcolonial resistance to the disruption of their livelihood strategies through the implementation of the project of 'development'.

The moving of cattle is done by young boys and men (mainly the *moran* and junior elders). Respondents indicated that security is required in case of attempted theft or attack by wild animals such as lions, leopards, cheetah etc. What this points to is that in these difficult circumstances, the males deploy their 'traditional' masculine idea of being 'defenders and providers', as they make the best out of the generally demasculinizing situation (poverty stricken) they find themselves in. One family for instance moved 150 heads of cattle to *Olturoto* Administrative Location (about 20-25 km away) and left only 10 milk cattle for family milk requirements. Goats were not moved because they could still browse and their water requirements are minimal. As one informant explained for instance:

"During the drought of 2000, the situation was so severe that we moved from Kisaju to Magadi (150 km away) area, then to Kilimambogo area, which is about 160 km from Kisaju. We went with over 50 cattle and returned with 16 only" (RM3).

Cattle may stay for months or even more than one year with mixed fortunes; "cattle may go as ten and return as a hundred, or go as hundred and return as ten" (RM 48). This means that they will then have multiplied if conditions are conducive or decreased in number because of diseases and other problems associated with adaptation to change of the locality.

Respondents also indicated that with privatization and individualization of land, this reciprocal relationship is being gradually eroded. Nowadays, there are some Maasai people

who will not allow others to pass through or graze animals on their farm. In some instances, this has resulted in misunderstandings and even violent confrontations. The landowners fear transmission of diseases to their herds from the visitors' herds or exhaustion of their pasturage. "Denying others access to one's 'base', however, denies community with them, which is exactly what private property rights and ideologies do" (Gudeman 2001, quoted in Turkon 2003: 162). Thus such actions that curtail reciprocal relationships seem to compromise an important masculine act of solidarity among the Maasai pastoralists. Homewood (1995) suggests that while such reciprocal relationships work for landowners, it does not work for those without sufficient resources to guarantee reciprocity.

#### **6.4 Conclusion**

This chapter has been an attempt to tease out social, political and economic issues that underlie property issues of land with a view to bringing to the fore issues pertinent to gender and the crisis of masculinities among the Maasai. We have seen that the controls imposed by British colonialism started the downward trend that has led to the current status of their land resources. After independence in 1963, the Maasai have continued to lose even more of their land through the expansion of wildlife conservation areas and the effects of the policies geared toward the conversion of their formerly communally owned land to private ownership. These policies have been supported by World Bank and other western institutions and, as we have seen, were based on faulty rationale. Indeed, the government's ambivalence has been noted and is best captured in the complexities and inconsistencies surrounding the policies and practices. The government and the World Bank 'specialists' who were involved in preparing the new policy guidelines neglected the established literature that has problematized the household and shown how the interest of its members cannot be assumed to be identical (Manji 2003). Nowhere in the policy frameworks is it suggested that gender relations should be an element of land policy. The result has been that the policy has reinforced the control of

resources by some men at the expense of some men and most women, a situation that has made life in many families more difficult.

Today, the effects of corruption in land allocation during privatization, sales by poor pastoralists once they receive land titles, and appropriation of land for parks and reserves are apparent in the land holdings of the Maasai herders. As a result, Kisaju is now a community functioning under patterns of land ownership occasioned by degradation of rangeland, landlessness and land sales where extreme parcelization and fragmentation have, and are, still occurring. Most families can thus no longer sustain themselves solely on the basis of the productivity of their miniscule pieces of land. These have given rise to hitherto unknown social and economic stratification and marginalization of many households and a crisis in masculinity manifested in generational conflicts, people-wildlife conflicts, and crises emanating from the sale of land.

Using insights from postcolonial theoretical perspectives we have been able to draw out continuities from colonial to independent times in the policies and practices pertaining to land issues. We can thus conclude that the individualization and privatisation of Maasai land is largely a legacy of colonialism. The same applies to the conversion of Maasailand into wildlife conservation areas. We have also seen that privatization of land after independence had gendered implications as the ownership of the land was mainly vested in men. Using the theory of hegemonic masculinities, we can conclude that this privatization enhanced the power of men in general over women by reinforcing the gender ideology of 'man as manager/controller'. In addition, the power of some men over other men was enhanced through the unequal distribution of land where a few Maasai men ended up with disproportionate shares of land. In summary we can conclude that land policies and practices since independence have had far reaching implications for the livelihoods and lifestyles of the Maasai in Kisaju and Maasailand in general.

## Chapter Seven: ‘We are in *enkop ngeurk* (new world)’: Gender and changing livelihoods and lifestyles in Kisaju and Naserian.

### 7.0 Introduction

“Much of the earlier literature on the Maasai gives the impression that they have been quite resistant to change and that there has been little or no diversification in their lives (Holland 1996: 1).

We have seen how grazing land for many Maasai pastoralists has decreased and for a number of reasons. Most families have subsequently been forced into an unsustainable ecological habitat and a common lamentation among my respondents was about the increase in *osina* (poverty). As one junior *moran* put it:

“The world of today is bad, *osina* has increased...lack of money and unemployment is a major problem. Men are struggling by any means to obtain food for each day. ‘*Merisio siligi o pala*’ (better to hope than to give up)” (RM 20).

What is now clear is that the declining productivity of the herds on an overgrazed range can no longer support the subsistence needs of the people and new sources of subsistence are being sought. Throughout the course of my research, I observed pressure on the residents seeking subsistence and cash under conditions of land scarcity. These pressures have led to a frantic search for income opportunities within and beyond the community, and livelihood strategies have considerably changed. In this chapter, I show that the Maasai are pursuing a diverse mixture of strategies to cope with the negative consequences of their reduced grazing land and the increased wants brought about by the adaptation of ‘modern’ lifestyles. In general, the chapter provides a glimpse into the changes that are taking place in the Maasai way of life in the uncertain drive toward modernity as they get incorporated into the global capitalist economy. By addressing the resultant rich complexities of this uncertain drive, I provide a picture of how the Maasai are adapting to these changes. As the sociologist, Mukhisa Kituyi (1993: 127) argues:

“To understand how social institutions and adaptive patterns have diversified, one needs to comprehend and yet transcend a focus on what the government does to the people and examine how people, as economic actors, respond to different policies and pressures”.

Changes in livelihoods are described using a combination of indicators such as crop cultivation and other agricultural innovations, migration, and the various occupations people engage in. Some are taking on a new identity that involves many forms of non-‘traditional’ enterprises such as teachers, NGO employees, stock traders/meat suppliers, butchers, drivers, walking stick sellers, pharmacist and transport business (*matatu-taxi*), while a number have more than one job, as for example stock keeping-cum-businessman.

This chapter thus analyses the variety of roles pursued by Maasai men and women of the study sites, roles that appear to be gendered. To illuminate the multiple dimensions of masculinities, I focus on the diverse enactments of gendered roles such as in the crop farmer/pastoralist dichotomy, migration strategies, cattle traders and cattle trekkers, watchmen, employed shepherds, men and modern housing. I also focus on how expressions of gender and masculinity are embedded within the politics surrounding changing gender roles in households.

That the Maasai in Kisaju are rapidly diversifying and now derive their main livelihoods (and sometimes considerable) income from other sources confirms what other studies such as Holland (1996) and Thompson and Homewood (2002), (carried out in Narok District), have suggested. Overall, diversification enables the spread of risks and creates opportunities for ‘straddling’ so that earnings, knowledge and experience gained in occupations outside the rearing of livestock can be used to one’s own benefit (cf. Rutten 1992). Changes in agricultural practices, as discussed below, can be seen in this light.

## **7.1 Crop farming and other agricultural innovations**



While the majority of the residents of Kisaju village still pursue some form of subsistence pastoralism, many families now survive only marginally as pastoralists. Commenting on the situation, one of my key informants, a local schoolteacher said:

“The biggest problems men are facing are economic and environmental problems especially *olamey* (drought) which at times is prolonged. There is no more land to herd your animals. So instead of keeping large herds, they have reduced them. They now engage in other businesses like shopkeeping, growing crops for sale, because ‘*medany okimojiro obo dasha*’ (One finger cannot kill a louse). There is diversification and people are also educating children for white-collar jobs” (CRM 19).

Thus one common strategy has been the adoption of crop cultivation. Crop farming has been increasingly adopted and most of the households have at least some portion of their land devoted to farming mainly beans, maize, vegetables and potatoes. Coast (2002) suggests that adapting cultivation can be viewed as a measure of changing livelihoods. My study indicates that cultivation is mainly being carried out so as to supplement subsistence requirements from pastoralism and the failure to raise adequate income from other sources. As one of the farmers-cum-small scale livestock traders aptly put it,

“My few animals cannot provide food for my family all the time and especially during *kiangazi* (dry season) and I therefore have to try all means to get food. That is why I started growing crops. But it is not easy because many times there is no harvest and I have even spent money on the one who tilled the farm. Now, I cannot slaughter my few animals for food because that is food for only a short time. But now and then I will sell an animal to pay for school fees” (RM 09).

Campbell (1993) also indicates that the experience of the drought in the 1970s forced many Maasai in Kajiado District to re-evaluate the basis of their economy and that some began to farm plots. Cultivation is thus emerging as one of the most important opportunities for diversification for the Maasai. Non-Maasai wives (from mainly crop farming communities such as the Kikuyu and Kamba) have also played a role in increasing the acceptance of cultivation that have been alien to the Maasai because of the low and unpredictable rainfall, and due to cultural norms. Culturally, the Maasai viewed the tilling of land as a dishonourable act that destroyed the soil and grass. They looked down on communities that entirely depended on

cultivation (Galaty 1982). Many of my respondents indicated that they mainly hired non-Maasai labour for cultivation. This change in subsistence strategies also implies that the dietary habits of the Maasai are gradually changing toward an increasing dependence on crop-based foodstuffs. This has implications for masculinity, as, for instance, the 'warrior' diet was strictly prescribed to non-livestock products (Talle 1988). In the context of this thesis, adapting crop farming is also viewed as an indicator of changing manly ideals of being 'people of cattle' discussed in section 5.3. The extract below, from a recent coverage of an NGO funded project for promoting crop farming in another part of Kenya's Maasailand (Loita), makes the relation between adoption of crop cultivation and changing *moranhood* masculinities more explicit:

"And now a culture that among the Maasai symbolised manhood, *moranhood*, has in Loita area been turned into a tool to help produce food for residents who for generations have survived on milk, blood and meat – thanks to a rural community farming initiative, Ilkerin Loita Integral Development Programme (ILIDP)" (The Standard Newspaper, 10/03/2004).

The success of this strategy (crop farming) in Kisaju is however quite minimal, as the climatic conditions are only marginally conducive to rainfed agriculture. Rainfall is erratic and unreliable and the rate of evapotranspiration is quite high, thus droughts are frequent and often severe while the soils in many places are rather shallow. Where harvests are made, the crop is normally consumed within the household. Beans are harvested in most cases as they have a short growing period. As we have noted, livestock have long provided economic security and a way for the Maasai to confront natural disasters such as frequent droughts and disease, with some form of resilience and flexibility. This is because livestock can move to areas with rainfall, greener pastures, and away from pests, the agricultural crops do not have this flexibility. The lack of success in this new livelihood strategy (cultivation) can be seen as part of the wider crisis of masculinity among the Maasai, many having failed to succeed as cattle keepers, their former source of masculine identity.

Related to this strategy, more families are now keeping poultry, mainly chickens, which according to the respondents is a relatively new innovation. Previously they did not keep or

eat poultry or poultry products because they despised them and considered them as 'just birds'. Indeed, many elders still will not eat any poultry or poultry products. To supplement cattle, the residents of Kisaju are also keeping an increasing number of goats and sheep because they can withstand shortages of water and utilize scant grass and bush vegetation. This can also be seen as another coping strategy in the light of the diminishing range resources. Besides, many men and women were also resisting marginalization through strategies that involve diversifying their income bases through employment, business opportunities and outmigration especially to urban areas in search of better livelihood opportunities.

## **7.2 Migration as a strategy**

As a geographical area, Kisaju village (see figure 7) may appear to be a small locality, one of the many villages in Ngong administrative division. However, viewed as a social and economic unit, it stretches far and wide through its links with other places. In section 6.3.3.2, we found that in their struggle to survive, Kisaju residents, and men in particular, still move their livestock even far beyond the village in search of greener pasture and return when environmental conditions get better. They have well-established reciprocal relationships with these other places. I also found that the movement may be for just a few weeks, months or even more than a year if the drought is quite severe and prolonged. But the movement by the Maasai to Naserian village in Nairobi over the past fourteen years merits further discussion as it points to rather unique strategies for survival. Kituyi (1993: 122) argues that:

“One of the most significant factors of Maasai geography is that their land adjoins the southern suburbs of Nairobi. This fact has been of great importance to their interaction with the regional market economy”.

Others (e.g. Fratkin and Smith 1995 and Msangya 1998) have also observed that pastoralists in Eastern Africa are moving closer to towns for a variety of reasons including loss of herding range and economic insecurity, but also due to the attractions of town life that offers

increasing economic and social opportunities. As mentioned in Chapter Three of this thesis, Naserian 'village' is one of the few small 'Maasai villages' in Nairobi, about 60 km from Kisaju village. Many of the residents are Kisaju diaspora who have been displaced by drought and have moved here over the past fourteen years (since the very severe drought of 1989), and diversified their livelihood strategies. As one elderly woman respondent explained:

"I came here from Kisaju to look for greener pastures because of drought. I came with my sons who are married. Being a widow, I found the place far much better than the 'reserve' in terms of income. I mainly sell milk. The business is good because I can sell milk for daily, weekly or monthly payment. Also there is a good market for beadwork because it is close to town. This makes me save money for other uses. I have now bought more than 10 sheep and I also use some of the money for school fees for my two grandchildren" (RF 65).

A middle-aged male respondent also said:

"I came to Nairobi in 1994 as a result of drought...to look for greener pastures. I felt comfortable to meet fellow Maasai from my home village and so I stayed with them. I found a place '*naoroo inkera*' (that feeds the children) with money from sale of milk and beadwork" (RM 63).

Many people decided to stay to take advantage of the available casual employment and small business opportunities afforded by the city of Nairobi, and the availability of grazing land in the open public spaces such as land reserved for expansion of roads and private unoccupied land. Other advantages of the location of the village that they mentioned include being close to better hospital facilities such as Kenyatta National Hospital, which is the biggest public hospital in the country that is only two kilometres away, 'we just walk there', as they put it. They also enjoyed being close to the city centre where they can 'always walk to and fro', in their words. They also reckoned that the location of their village allows them access to cheaper household goods. Indeed the biggest supermarket in Nairobi, *The Uchumi Hyper* is in their neighbourhood and items here are much cheaper than in rural Kisaju. In addition, they felt that being in Nairobi allows them access to 'information' and to establish some beneficial relationships with other city residents such as securing better jobs for their relatives. All these can be seen as being part of their wider spatial strategy for surviving the hard times.

Among themselves, they have chosen a village committee that deals with their day-to-day concerns such as problems like theft and other problems arising when their livestock trespass into private land and conflict arises. The committee also manages a school that they founded after converting some partially constructed and abandoned buildings in the vicinity into classes for their children and employing a few untrained teachers. They also converted one room in the buildings into a Christian church where they worshipped. The committee is composed of elders and some young men. Also of interest is the way Maasai in Naserian have exploited the stereotypical image of Maasai being 'backward' and 'ignorant', as a survival strategy by actually 'playing fools', as the following illustrates:

"Many Maasai graze their animals in restricted places since they know they can not be prosecuted due to being taken as 'fools'. They even settle on land belonging to other due to being taken as 'fools'...*na bado wananjua tuu hiyo ni mahali ya wenyewe* (while they know clearly it is other people's land). They can pretend not even to know Swahili (the national language) to avoid being chased away. They use their ignorance for the better" (RM 64).

This seems to confirm the observation by Waller (1993: 297) who noted that, "from early in the colonial period, if not before, Maasai attempted to turn outsiders' perception of them to their own advantage". In a way, this reflects what Bhahba (1994) calls mimicry and is a form of postcolonial resistance employed by the Maasai. As we shall also see in section 8.5.3, many young Maasai are increasingly using the romanticized Maasai *moran* image to make a living from the tourist industry.

The residents however live in perpetual fear of eviction by the government. There are also other problems as explained by residents:

"Being near the town, thieves at times steal property from our village...one time they stole our cattle. Thieves also sometimes attack people at night when they are coming home. It is not safe walking at night like in the rural area. Cows are also frequently knocked down by vehicles along roads" (RM 66).

"During drought seasons, when there is no water cows may take dirty sewage water and die. They may also swallow plastic especially the young one and get sick" (RM 67).

As we have seen, while the initial intention of migrating to Naserian was to save their herds from drought and thus maintain their pastoral identity, opportunities to diversify their livelihoods cropped up after migration. In the next section, we thus look at these 'new' occupations men and women involve themselves in, not only in Naserian, but also in Kisaju. Suffice to mention that there are a wide variety of occupations that they are engaged in and only those deemed most important to this study are dealt with in greater detail.



**Figure 7.0** Part of Naserian Village, (Source: Field Survey 2003)





Figure 7.1 Maasai cattle in a street in the city of Nairobi (Source: Field Survey 2003)

### 7.3 New roles for men? Men in business and employment

An important strategy that has implications for gender and masculinity has been the engagement in various business activities by both women and men with the objective of making money and raising their income. Both women's and men's expanded roles in economic activities were often identified by respondents as intersecting closely with poverty and the increased demand for goods and services e.g. education, and other 'modern' goods and services. The business enterprises are of a wide variety including relatively well-established retail outlets for household consumer goods, buying and selling of livestock, selling milk, second hand clothes, and bead items. Let us look at the businesses women and men engage in and their implications for gender and masculinity.

As Whitehead (2002) points out, paid employment provides an important arena by which the discursive subject can achieve a sense of identity. Indeed, the consideration of men, masculinities and work is important in order to comprehend the existence of gender-based

vulnerabilities of men of certain social groups (Jackson 1999). While a small number of Maasai men were working in the formal sector such as the civil service, a large number of males in my study were engaged in various jobs related to the pastoral economy such as cattle traders and *emborokuai* (cattle trekkers), *ocekut* (hired herdsman), *askari wa usiku* (night watchmen/guards), hides and skin dealers etc. I will focus mainly on cattle traders, watchmen, *emborokuai*, and shepherds as these were the most common.

### 7.3.1 Cattle traders and *emborokuai* (hired trekkers)

These are some pastoral related activities in which a large number of males are engaged. Traders vary from relatively successful ones to those who are barely surviving. Well-off traders have their own transport vehicles (mainly pick-up vans) and purchase meat in the abattoirs in various parts of Ngong and beyond, and supply it to their clients in Nairobi. Others purchase live animals from distant markets and hire trekkers (*emborokuai*) to 'foot' them for many days to abattoirs where they sell them as live animals for slaughter, or to other middlemen. These two categories of traders are however just a small minority of those engaged in the cattle trade and many are struggling to keep afloat. One man in his late twenties had the following rather typical explanation:

"I am a small scale businessman at Isinya. I buy and supply meat at Isinya and make just a little money. I didn't choose to do the job after my 'O' levels but was forced by circumstances. There is only little money in this business. Sometimes you supply but the clients don't pay you anything for a long time. Other times there is no meat to supply or it is too little. After I finished school, I thought I would go straight to an office but was amazed at how life was" (RM 3).

Another man in his mid-thirties and doing the same job, was relatively more successful and said:

"My work involves supplying meat to *Bama* market in Nairobi. I started this work after finishing my high school studies due to lack of an office job. These days even if you go to college, *hakuna kazi* (no job), so you must try to survive by other ways. Without struggle, there will be no family care and support. After a lot of struggle now things are good" (RM 5).



Livestock brokers are another category of traders who deserve mention here. Typically, they wait for villagers or relatively large-scale traders to bring their animals to the livestock market and negotiate a minimum amount that each animal should fetch for the owner. The brokers then negotiate with buyers and ensure that they sell the stock at a higher price than the owner demands thereby making a profit. There are also some brokers who wait for the sellers along the way to the market and buy the animals there and then transport and sell them in the market. Lowest in the hierarchy of these businessmen are the boys and men who are contracted to skin the slaughtered animals and those who 'broker' animal organs such as heads, legs, intestines etc.

The *emborokuai*, as has been mentioned, are Maasai men who trek cattle over long distances for a wage. They leave home for long periods of time and cover huge stretches of terrain. Many expressed the difficulties encountered in moving cattle as this typical response from an male elder illustrates:

"I am an *emborokuai* and my work involves moving cattle from Bissil to Rongai on foot (which are about 70 km apart). It is a very tiresome job but '*tumezoea*' (we are used to it). This job was not my choice but came out of no alternative. '*Tuna watoto na hakuna chakula*' (we have children and there is no food). Being illiterate, we have to do these difficult jobs which involves a lot of struggle" (RM 4).

When I asked him what specific problems they encountered in their work he explained:

"Sometimes, these cattle...one may get lost along the way and you will be responsible. You may go for a long way without food because towns are far apart. Also, some people do not want us to pass through their land because they think cattle will transmit disease. At night, no sleeping and wild animals such as hyenas at times try to snatch the cattle. All the cold of the night find us travelling....because we move day and night....there is no reliable place to sleep throughout".

Clearly, trekking is a hard job and is made worse by the fact that the returns are quite meagre. The trekkers lead a very simple life and most of the time they are living together in the bush as what Holland (1996) calls a 'company not too dissimilar to the *empikas*', the raiding group of old. Holland (1996) carried out a study among the Maasai people of Narok District in

Kenya on the various pastoral related occupations of Maasai men. He reckoned that many young men were mainly attracted to this type of work because of the hazards and shared challenges rather than for reasons of poverty and destitution. He also indicates that most of the cattle traders he interviewed saw cattle trading as a substitute for the practices of traditional *moranism* such as getting animals through hardships, spending most of the time away from home, the presence of a profit element in both trading and traditional raiding, involvement of the younger men who are in competition with each other in trading, and 'footing it' over long distances. He also mentions that both jobs are done for prestige, because they are exposed to many dangers, the job is risky and there are quick riches for those who are successful and tasks are done for personal profits and their families.

To begin with, my study showed that it was not just men of *moran* age equivalent that were doing trading and trekking but also older men. In addition, the cattle traders (employers of some *emborokuai*) I met were relatively well-off and did not do the trekking of the animals themselves but rather employed *emborokuai* who were poor Maasai and got little material and other satisfaction from the job of trekking. Many of the men I interviewed or held discussions with suggested that they would have preferred other more rewarding endeavours, especially formal white collar public and private sectors jobs, as they saw a few prominent Maasai doing. Doing these 'better' jobs was viewed as a much-preferred masculine performance. My contention is that Holland's findings are different from mine to a big extent because his study was based in Narok District not only about ten years earlier, but also because the district had not witnessed subdivision of communal land into group ranches and later into individual holdings by then, and had not therefore experienced the high level of socio-economic stratification as was the case in Kajiado District (see sections 6.2.2, 6.2.3 and 6.3.2) and Ngong division in particular.

Holland also takes the *emborokuai* and the traders to be one and the same people. My study shows that there is a difference between the two; one is an employee, *emborokuai*, moving cattle which are not his (for a wage), and the other, the trader, is the owner who does not trek but goes to the source, buys the cattle and hands them over to the trekkers and then boards a vehicle and goes to wait for the trekkers to bring the cattle to the towns where he sells them. Galaty and Doherty (1989) have also pointed out similarities between these activities and that of the *moran* of the past and suggests that cattle trekking represents a mechanism for young men to accumulate capital and to build a herd, “much as raiding once did” (cf. Holland 1996: 177). Holland sees trekking and trading as substitutes for traditional cattle raiding practices in Maasailand:

“There is a degree of ‘camaraderie’ in the face of the dangers, both from wild animals and thieves along the way. Competition and rivalry is still present in this modern equivalent of ‘raiding’ and those young men who are successful come through the system with a name for being wise and competent businessmen. The profits still accrue to their families in the form of cash or newly purchased animals for their own family herds” (1996: 177).

Holland claimed that his findings confirmed those of Evangelou (1984) who had interviewed a number of traders some years back and indicated that the attraction of trading was more than economic; as most traders also viewed it as also simply a way of making life more enjoyable than it would otherwise be if they just stayed at home and looked after cattle. Contributing to this positive aura, he opined, cattle trading is one of the few forms of regular employment that does not compromise the Maasai lifestyle. One’s cultural identity is fully retained and for young men, even enhanced (*ibid*).

As I have indicated above, in my study, the traders and *emborokuai* were different, and indeed, none of the above authors have made reference to *emborokuai* in their studies while this term was well known in my study area. While the traders, especially the more established ones, occupy relatively prestigious masculine power positions, the *emborokuai* do not. Indeed the suggestion that their status could reflect the positions of the *moran* after a successful raid sounds rather far fetched. As we have seen, successful raiding would bring in cattle (wealth)

and prestige to the *moran*. This is not the case with *emborokuai* whose meagre earnings and the problems they endure in their work do not reflect the material worth and prestige of the *moran* of by-gone days. To an extent then, this activity seems to have been romanticized to fit the enduring 'traditional', stereotypical notions of the warrior aspects of Maasai *moranhood* masculinities. While one may concur that the trekkers may be deriving 'some' satisfaction from their work, with the consistent lamentations in their responses, it could be seen at as a case of 'if you cannot avoid it, you may as well relax and enjoy it'. In addition, an aspect like cooperation among the trekkers is still quite vital in their work as they face real dangers along the way. These are people who are aware of their powerlessness given the way their society has been stratified of late as a consequence of land policies, and the emergence of new ideals of masculinity. They are people who are frustrated in their attempt to actualise contemporary masculine ideals. In terms of the theory of hegemonic masculinities, we may say that they have been marginalized.

Evangelou (1984) indicates that the primary reason given by the traders for their involvement in trading was their response to consumption demands, with food purchases most commonly mentioned. The second reason was to obtain money to purchase cattle for the increase of their personal herds. The second reason's implication here is that the Maasai have refused to let go of their close attachment to cattle even as the environmental circumstances seem uncondusive owing to the diminished range resource base. Though his study was twenty years ago, this seemed true of my respondents as many still aspire to be successful pastoralists, as is indicated by their tendency to purchase more herds with any available disposable income (just like there are many who have sold their land in an effort to restock).

### 7.3.2 *Askari wa usiku (night watchmen)*

This is perhaps the most well known occupation of many modern day Maasai men and the category about which most ‘myths’ have been generated. Holland indicates that there are many stories and comments about the ‘honesty’, ‘ferocity’ and ‘hardiness’ of the Maasai watchmen in Nairobi and elsewhere who are reputed “to strike first and ask questions afterwards” (1996: 185). Often, the impression given is that there are great numbers of Maasai males making their way to the urban centres of Kenya, notably Nairobi, to take up this type of work (Kituyi 1990). In her study, Talle (1988) had also noted that the residence priority pursued by many destitute pastoralists is settling close to shopping centres. They thus gradually oriented themselves away from their herds and pastoral pursuits toward wage employment and ‘town life’. Once the herd dropped below a certain limit, Maasai men seemed to become less interested in the management of their animals and consequently left a great deal of the responsibility to their wives (*ibid*).

Holland (1996) indicates that though it was not the purpose of his study to investigate the migrant groups in the city of Nairobi, on numerous occasions, he met with various men working as watchmen in the city. Many of those contacted were Maasai from Kajiado District and not none of the watchmen he met claimed to have come from Narok District (his then area of research). He indicates this as an excellent area for future research to follow-up the migrant Maasai workers in Nairobi and develop case studies on them and their families. This section is an attempt to fill this gap.

With little economic opportunity, and relatively limited educational attainment, many Maasai have been moving to Nairobi only to join the urban poor. Fratkin (2001) notes that increased commoditization of the livestock economy has led to growing polarization of pastoralists into the haves and have-nots, particularly in Maasai areas close to urban markets. He further notes that lack of recognition and destitution are factors contributing to the increasing drift of Maasai men to the towns and trading centres. Evidence from my study indicates that many

Maasai have also moved to Nairobi as a result of drought in the rural area of origin as I will show shortly. Rutten (1992) also noted that a certain stigma exists concerning some young Maasai who flood the streets of Nairobi looking for jobs as *askari wa usiku* (night watchmen) for shops, factories and the better-off residential areas of the city. Since 1975, the number of Maasai watchmen hired by employers in Nairobi had increased tremendously (The Standard Newspaper 21/12/80 and 12/04/84, cited in Rutten 1992). He indicates that this would also be the result of the good reputation of Maasai watchmen. Letters in newspapers had praised the Maasai for their trustworthiness, hard-work and bravery (The Daily Nation Newspaper 30/12/77, cited in Rutten 1992). This stereotype persists to date as the extract below from The Daily Nation Newspaper (2004) shows:

“Maasai men are said to be fierce, courageous but unreasonable. Even today, a common stereotype of the Maasai is that ‘you do not argue with one because you will provoke him to a feud’” (The Daily Nation Newspaper 10-01-2004).

The Standard Newspaper estimated that in 1980 some 600 Maasai were ‘roaming’ Nairobi doing all sorts of jobs, mostly guarding shops, 24-hour nightclubs and cars. Most of these watchmen were said to be from Kajiado District, particularly from Ngong area (The Daily Nation Newspaper 24-08-82, cited in Rutten 1992). The older generation of Maasai labourers in Nairobi came to the city after the drought of 1975 and by the early 1980s the number of semi-educated Maasai was thought to be rising among the groups of Nairobi watchmen. Holland (1996) for example notes that in 1969, the total Maasai population of Nairobi was a mere 970 (with an appropriate ratio of male to female of 3:2), but by 1979 this figure had risen to 3,425 (with an increase male to female ratio of 3:1). This obviously indicates that more men than women had been moving to the city and offers some credence to the claim that many moved there to take up security jobs.

Talle (1988: 268-9) also informs us that the poor ‘town seekers’ are very often regarded as ‘lost Maasai’ because they adapt the habits and norms of town life that differ from those in the pastoral context. Although they are still recognized as Maasai by language and heritage,

she continues, they are not 'proper' Maasai in the sense of being 'cattle people'. Due to the fact that they are propertyless in terms of livestock, they lack a vital dimension of Maasai management identity. A recent study in Tanzania also indicates that many Maasai men have found an 'urban niche as *askaris*' (guards), many of who cited the 'loss of grazing land' as the reason for migrating to urban areas (Mung'ong'o and Mwamfupe 2004, cited in Markakis 2004: 12).

My data on the issue of Maasai watchmen here is mainly based on my findings about the Maasai of Naserian who, as we have seen thus far, migrated there in search of a safe haven for their livestock. The first people to arrive in 1989 started off herding their livestock and soon discovered openings in the security job market in the area. To enable them take up this job, they would hire herdsman who were mainly newly arrived Maasai men from far in the interior of Maasailand. They would pay such herders a fraction of what they earned as watchmen and thus make a profit. One middle-age respondent in Naserian explained:

"Most, if not all, men here are employed as watchmen, others work both as watchmen and herdsman during daytime. They are employed as watchmen mainly because they are thought to be brave and don't steal" (RM 57).

In narrating his story, another said:

"I came to Nairobi and first became an employed herdsman. A friend who had been sent to look for a Maasai watchman in the reserve directed me. I found the place good for family provision. One can get something...at least daily food for the family. Later I went and brought my wife and child from reserve (rural area). I later bought some sheep that I took care of together with the ones I was employed to herd. I have now bought more than 10 sheep and I had come with none. Now I do both jobs, watchman at night and herding during the day. I have to struggle since I had no one to depend on (RM 67).

A common feeling among them was that they were in the job because people took them to be brave, and honest: "Maasai men are believed to be very brave and never surrender" (RM 68). Some equated the job with traditional *moranship* masculinity. They particularly equated it to raiding and as one elder put it, "it is like setting a thief to catch a thief" (RM 47). He further explained that, since the *morans* were trained and thus knew how to steal, it was easy for them to catch a thief as he knew the thief's tricks. The elder claimed to have spent nine years in the

bush where he and fellow *morans* dealt with fierce animals like lions and that it was a taboo to run away from a lion. Viewed this way, the watchmen can be said to be deploying their 'traditional' masculinity as an instrument of survival. This allows them to gain some pride in their manhood as a protector and as a provider. It actualises their idea of excitement in combat or potential combat, and as a result of their earnings they buy livestock and therefore restore their status as herdsman. Morrell (2001: 209) informs us that: "Men are conscious of their masculinity and they deploy it in various ways-sometimes instrumentally in order to achieve a particular objective".

However, this 'tough' portrayal (by themselves and others) is in sharp contrast to their painful awareness of the limitations of their jobs. Indeed, the persistent lamentations by many respondents about their low earnings and poor working conditions point to much lower status and feelings of powerlessness that go with the job. They seemed to derive little job satisfaction and were acutely aware of their low status vis-à-vis other (mostly more educated Maasai and non-Maasai men) who were doing more satisfying and better paying jobs and occupying higher and more exalted power positions. After doing their jobs at night, by day, they are for instance confronted by those men who are far more successful than them – fellow Kenyans living in large houses and driving cars. This undermines their sense of status and achievement and exacerbates a notion of failed/marginalised masculinity. As Whitehead (2002: 6) indicates:

"Notions of masculinity are increasingly multiple, rendering traditional forms of being male, if not redundant, certainly marginal".

Indeed, the job goes with many hazards that they all complained about. First, they are aware that their employers were taking advantage of their illiteracy. Indeed, the employers, other than being attracted by the notion of the warrior stereotype, know that since their employees are illiterate they cannot get jobs with the formal security firms. What this points out is that their illiteracy has led to their subordination by the more economically well-off city residents. The employers for instance take advantage of the Maasai's ignorance of labour laws:



“We are given first priority by employers in the nearby areas. We are known to be brave and can’t steal like other people. But we also have no alternative. Some employers exploit us and sometimes do not pay us.... *wanaturusha pesa yetu* (they con us of our money)” (RM 59-watchman).

“Maasai are taken to be ‘fools’...That they don’t know anything. When employed as watchmen – no agreement is done – no written agreement is done” (RM 61-watchman).

“Maasai have only found this a suitable work for them because they are illiterate. Those who have gone to school don’t want the work” (RM 63).

They particularly lamented about the working conditions:

“During rainy seasons all the rains is on you because the employer is strict and can’t allow you in the house. Any loss of anything...you will have to account for it” (RM 64).

“The job is risky because in Nairobi there are so many thieves with deadly weapons like guns, but we only have “*rungus*” (sticks) for guarding. I decided to risk my life because there is not alternative. I can’t get other jobs because I am illiterate. In Nairobi there are many jobs – but for those who went to school” (RM 66)

“If watchmen could be registered like other guards, it will be good because they won’t be exploited in terms of not being denied their salaries. They will also be given rights like free time to rest and holidays” (RM 62).

The masculine identities of Maasai watchmen have spatial and temporal dimensions and are somewhat contradictory. In their work places at night there is both a sense of fulfilment and frustration, as they go home they encounter others who are doing much better than them. However, when they reach home, they are hailed as heroes who have sacrificed for their families by going to work.

### 7.3.3 *Olcekut (employed shepherd)*

As has been suggested above, the *olcekut* are among the most socially and economically marginal groups of Maasai men that I came across. Writing in 1988, Talle noted that the *olcekut* institution had its foundation in the economic stratification existing in Maasai society and it was rather embarrassing particularly for an elder to work as a herder. Many of the Maasai herdsmen whom I encountered in my research in both Kisaju and Naserian came from

parts of Maasailand that are far away from Nairobi. As explained by some of the residents of the villages:

“Almost all children of this village go to school, but Maasai boys from far-off places such as Matapato come here and are employed as *olcekut*. There are very few who go to school” (RM 17).

“Young boys here should be herding but because they go to school, we have to employ herders” (RM 18).

It appears that there is a steadily growing poorer Maasai who had few chances of building their herds save through employment, or who take employment for sheer survival. This has solved some of the labour problems of the richer Maasai families, in particular with herding. Richer families can afford and prefer to educate their children instead of keeping them at home as herders or domestic servants. In some homesteads, a patron-client relationship between poor and rich pastoralists seems to develop. Talle (1988: 242) indicated that;

“men without livestock property (*olaisinani*, pl. *ilaisinak*; ‘poor men’) do not have a ‘voice’ vis-à-vis rich men. They have no means of opposing the will of the men on whom they are materially dependent”.

Those who live as dependants upon richer relatives and age-mates or as contracted herders for owners of large herds sometimes complain bitterly about their fate. As dependants, they have minimal influence and power. The following explanation by one of the *olcekut* gives insight into their experiences:

“I came from Kajiado Central to look for employment as a shepherd. I have never attended any school. I have taken this job of *olcekut* because I have no alternative. I am not married but work to provide for my own needs and those of my parents, brothers and sisters. My work is mainly to carefully look after cattle...injecting sick animals, giving them doses and dipping them. I am also in charge of sweeping the homestead. There are problems with this job...being far from home I may not know the immediate problems at home. I am also accountable for any loss of livestock, which happens once in a while” (RM 13).

All said and done, it can be argued that to an extent, by participating in livestock movements (*emborokuai*), livestock trade, watchmen, herdsman etc, the Maasai men were able to appropriate some masculine identities, and to some degree escape the demasculinizing effect of poverty, albeit rather superficially for many. In terms of the theory of hegemonic

masculinities, what this discussion of men's involvement in employment shows is that the gradual stratification of the Maasai has led to some men getting in subordinate positions and a few enjoying dominant status.

#### **7.4 Women's Involvement in Business**

In this section I look at the businesses women engage in, and their implications for gender and masculinity. Winnie Mitulla (2003) observes that women's participation in the labour force and economic activities has risen in many 'Developing' Countries owing to factors largely driven by development such as urbanisation, higher educational levels, expanding opportunities for women, and rising poverty pushing women into the labour force. In Kisaju and Naserian, milk and beadwork are the mainstay of many Maasai women entrepreneurs. Some of the women had this to say about this occupation:

"My main work is doing business dealing with "*isaen*" (beadwork)...husbands are no longer depended upon for minor needs. Women have discovered that it is not a must to depend on husbands. They have alternatives in business to provide for families" (RF 35).

"I am a housewife and a maker and seller of beadwork. I also support my husband in his business of supplying meat by some times giving him money to expand it" (RF 38).

The women buy the raw materials for the beadwork from the urban centres and make the bead items at home and later sell them at the weekly market in Nairobi while some take them all the way to the coastal town of Mombasa (about 600 kilometres away) where they may fetch more money. Those in Naserian village have more advantage because the Nairobi market is more accessible and some buyers even come to the village to make their purchases. In addition to beadwork, the majority of women also sell milk from the family herd while some, especially those in Nairobi, also buy milk from producers and retailers and supply it to their clients in the city. This is particularly common during the dry season when the family herd supply goes down. Many women in Naserian have even employed young men to distribute

milk to their clients using bicycles. Other business activities include selling of *mitumba* (second hand clothes), livestock, herbal medicines (plant roots, branches and barks).

My personal observations and discussions with both men and women revealed that an increasing number of women in Kisaju and Naserian rely on such trading and this is having implications for gender roles and relations. As these Maasai women put it:

“The world is changing and even men’s roles are changing as even wives have now become family breadwinners. Women sell milk and *insaen* to provide for their families. Though strong, many men nowadays depend on their wives for provision while others no longer care...you will find a man with no income, yet he marries even three wives and gives them children... giving every mother a burden to bring up her children. So if the mother is lazy, they will end up being beggars...this is oppression... how can you bear and give such a burden to one person!” (RF 31)

“Women no longer solely depend on men to be provided for everything...even they provide for their husbands because of poverty...women have got into hard jobs that was thought to be for men like buying and selling livestock. Many women now own their own property. They have also risen up economically through women’s groups where they help each other” (RF 37).

These comments further suggest that for some reasons, men are ‘underperforming’ in their ascribed role of provisioning for their families (in the opinion of the respondents) and that such roles are now increasingly being undertaken by women. It then appears that commercialization and sedentarization has presented new economic opportunities for women. Reflecting on the involvement of women in business in recent times other women further indicated that:

“Women have a big role in the community. Unlike in the past...they nowadays provide. Even widows run their families as normal families. ‘*Enkitok enkoriong*’ (the woman is the backbone) of every family. A home without a woman is no happy home. But men have exploited them, making their roles invisible...but they are major” (RF 37).

“Today, women have learned that they should not just depend on their husbands. They have as well started their own businesses, which help them to generate income. Like me now I sell “*mitumba*”(second hand clothes) and I have noticed that my business can be big if I continue because there is no competition in this type of business” (RF 43).

“Since men give women responsibilities, women have involved themselves in business like beadwork and livestock business. Some women buy and sell livestock....The most famous in this business is from *Bissel* and sells her livestock in Nairobi. She now has three lorries of her own” (RF 48)

The returns obtained from the sales are used to meet the need for other household foodstuffs such as grains, sugar, tea and rice and to purchase clothes and pay for school fees, and

medical care. For instance such business may be the only source of money for school fees. Women also appear to have a big leeway over the expenditure of the money earned from their businesses. Husbands recognize that women are using the profit to buy more milk and beadwork materials for the next sale, as well as to pay school fees and meet household needs.

As some men put it:

“Women nowadays take care of the families – they provide food and clothing – even buy cows for themselves. They pay for children’s school fees because they get money from the business they do. They sell milk, beads and other businesses. Women depend no longer on their husbands” (RM 62).

“Today’s women are very hardworking...even than their husbands. There are some wives who even provide for their husbands” (RM 80, middle aged man).

“Here women are very hardworking, they sell milk and do other businesses like beadwork. They support their families and provide food and clothing. Even wives maintain their husbands financially because senior men like me do not do much work for money. Except from sale of manure, nothing else” (RM 63, elderly man).

“They are very hardworking, wake up at *saa tisa ya usiku* (three a.m.) to milk cows and sell the milk at the nearby estates. By 8 a.m. all are already at home doing some other work such as beadwork...already with money in their pockets” (RM 76).

The men too viewed the women in Naserian as having an edge over their rural counterparts in Kisaju:

“In the reserve, women depend more on men. Here (Naserian), women sell milk and also beadwork and husbands sell “*mbolea*” (animal manure). Women sell milk to the neighbouring residential estates such as Mugoya, Dam, South C and Kibera slums” (RM 57).

Others still saw it in terms of equality:

“There is a sense of equality – in terms of roles- women now too provide for their families. They no longer just depend on men” (RM 36, junior elder).

One man even suggested that women have become men (albeit figuratively) and suggests that this is an indicator of increasing equality of the between men and women:

“Women are no longer ‘servants’ to their husbands but are equal... can also provide for their families... “*etaa ilerra tioshuaa*” (have become men internally) (RM 54).

This can be seen as an acknowledgement by men of women’s increasing contributions and roles in the households and a rise in what Halberstam (2002: 372) calls “heteropatriarchal culture” in her discussion on female masculinity. According to my respondents, in Naserian,

women are making more money than most men because milk and beadwork fetched higher prices here and the cost of transport is minimal given their proximity to the market. Another thing is that the rate of flow of money (liquidity) among women is also relatively high since they mainly sell milk on a daily basis and beadwork on a weekly basis. On the other hand, the flow of money to men is rather limited as for instance those who are employed as watchmen and herdsman are paid at the end of the month. While the *mborea* (animal dung manure) that men sell does not fetch much money and sale of livestock is infrequent. It is no wonder then that women are the ones who are mainly financing the household needs of their families. It was clear that many families are now increasingly depending on the livelihood skills of women. While these trends may have added to women's labour loads, they also seem to be associated with rising female household decision-making power. Some men however felt that this apparent gain in women is a loss to their authority as the following comments indicate:

"The major problem facing men today is poverty... no money. This has led to breakdown of families...if there is no wealth, some women run away. When a woman is economically stronger than the man, she makes the man lose control over his family" (RM 34).

"Women have really started growing horns. I mean, their behaviour started changing rapidly since most of them started going to towns for their bead businesses. They are disrespectful to their husbands" (RM 46).

For some men then, being able to provide and subsequently control, was a marker of masculinity that they felt was slipping from their fingers. Andrea Cornwall indicates that:

"The idealized version of masculinity embodied in the "man-as-provider" discourse has come to be bound up with the capability of the husband to fulfil obligations as providers: 'taking proper care', bringing in bread, spending money to secure women's happiness and compliance" (2003: 242)

Other scholars such as Cleaver (2002) have also argued the case for the demasculinizing effects of poverty. The paradox in the case of the Maasai, as seen above, is manifest in that men still appreciate the role women are playing in providing for their families even as they feel rather uncomfortable with this state of affairs. Holloway probably captures the essence of this paradox more clearly when he explains such a situation as one in which:

“...a man despises a woman for weakness, and wants her to be strong and equally responsible, yet because of his investment in being strong, he must position her as weak. He needs her to be weak to register his strength, yet he devalues this weakness” (1984: 257, quoted in Jackson 1999: 94).

The observations by environmentalist Prof. Wangari Maathai, the 2004 Noble Peace Prize Winner, may also serve to explain this paradox further. Wangari got divorced in the early 1980s. In a newspaper interview on the 16<sup>th</sup> October 2004, she explained that she got divorced because her husband complained that she was too educated, too strong, too successful, too stubborn and too hard to control. But in a roundabout way, she blames society for this:

“Society subscribes a certain image of the man — he must own property, he must support his wife, and the women must put themselves in a situation where they must accommodate the man to do that. If the roles are reversed, society wants to know what is wrong with the man, or they will assume that his wife controls him. We used to hear people asking, ‘who’s wearing the trousers in this home?’ And that was what mattered. No matter how useless, the man was still in charge. If the woman demonstrated even the slightest bit of independence, or success, even if the man was not personally bothered by it, he was expected to be bothered” (The Standard Newspaper, 16-10 - 2004).

Although Wangari is not a Maasai, her story shows that the wider Kenyan society’s expectation of a man can have profound implications for the stability of a family when a woman appears as if she is the household head. Her story can be seen as a microcosm of the contradictions that face the contemporary Kenyan society. The recent experiences of a newly formed lobby group in Kenya, *Men for Gender Equality* (MGE), also attests to these contradictions. In their 16 days of campaigning dubbed ‘Activism Against Gender Violence’ in November 2004, (as reported in The Sunday Nation Newspaper, 05/12/2004), they encountered varied responses from a cross-section of Kenyan men. Some agreed that there are disadvantaged women and thus a need for enhancing gender equality and equity. Other men felt they themselves also needed help and narrated how their wives had thrown them out of their homes. “We are suffering but tradition prohibits us from crying. We need help!” they said. Yet others were very sceptical of the idea: “At Machakos Bus Stop, most of the people said if implemented, the issues of gender equity and equality will upset the ‘existing peace’ in

the home”. One man also remarked, “*Hiyo maneno itawafanya wanawake kuwa vichwa ngumu* (These issues will only make our women become hard-headed)” (*ibid*).

To be fair, there are many households among the Maasai that are run as what Turkon (2003) calls ‘partnerships’ in which both men and women contribute. The point here however is that women are increasingly having to take up more socially-prescribed male roles than before, which adds to their roles, since they still shoulder the major proportion of domestic reproductive work (see section 7.5.3).

## **7.5 Gender, Housing, and Domestic chores**

“The Western impact on the colonial world ruptured gender orders and initiated an endlessly complex struggle for new relationships” (Connell 1995, quoted in Ouzgane and Coleman 1998: 1).

In this section, I show how dynamics in the culturally important space of the house is emerging as a contested terrain and an important pointer to the process of changing roles and relations. I illustrate that the ongoing changes from the ‘traditional’ to ‘modern’ houses has implications on Maasai masculinity in the sense that it offers them both challenges and opportunities to maintain and enhance their masculine positions. I will also show that there have been issues pertaining to domestic chores that impinge on Maasai masculinity. To achieve these goals, I start by looking at the Maasai ‘traditional’ housing where I draw mainly, but not exclusively, from the work of Talle (1988, 1987) and Jacob (1965) and Kipuri (1983). This will be followed by an analysis of contemporary housing and finally the gender politics of domestic labour/chores.

### **7.5.1 Maasai ‘Traditional’ Housing**

Until fairly recently, the Maasai lived in villages and occupied temporary houses (*enkanji* pl. *inkajijit*), which were small, and lightly built and constructed of poles, twigs and grass, and plastered with cow dung and mud (Kipuri 1983). The houses was constructed by driving



saplings into the ground as walls, bending and tying this together to form a roof, then plastering this inverted, basketlike structure with a mixture of cattle dung and mud (Jacob 1965, Seno and Shaw 2002, Talle 1987). To build, repair and keep the house was entirely the responsibility of women (Talle 1987) and a woman was considered the 'owner proper' (*enopeny enkaji*) of her house (Msangya 1998). The interior of the house consisted of a large room divided into different sections: the 'little bed' (*erruat kitii*), the 'big bed', and the sleeping place for calves and kids (*olale*) and an open place between the two beds (*olteren*) with the hearth (*enkima*) of the house (Kipuri 1983). The beds erected at each edge of the room were actually two raised levels made of light poles and branches covered with hides on top and separated by sapling partitions or cattle hides. Rules of conduct and moral behaviour circumscribe the 'little bed' and the 'big bed'. The 'little bed' was used exclusively by the house owner and was acknowledged to be her private area where she kept her milk calabashes, beer pots, and various personal belongings. It was also the place where she sat while preparing food, cleansing the calabashes, chatting with visitors e.t.c. It was also a place where a woman gave birth and where she and the youngest children slept. The 'big bed' was the reception area of the house. It was set-aside for the husband and for visitors: a place for them to eat, drink, gather and sleep. This was also the place where sexual intimacies were supposed to take place. People structurally assigned to the 'big bed' area would not enter the section of the 'little bed' without permission from the woman or only upon a standing agreement with her. It would, for instance have been most rude of the husband to intrude into this part of the house.

Above all, a house was the place where women prepared food, entertained guests, tended and fed children and kept young animals at night. Furthermore, the house provided the physical setting for rituals associated with the creation of femaleness and reproduction of family structure. The ritual as well as the practical aspects of child delivery, clitoridectomy and marriage was performed inside the house as well as the shaving of mother and child naming

ceremony. Men also 'returned' to the house to be reincorporated into the family life after the period in the *manyatta*. In their mother's house, the retiring *moran* perform part of the important 'milk drinking' ritual (*eokoto ekule*), after which they were allowed to drink milk alone without the companionship of age-mates. After this ritual, the young man was free to marry. Thus, by socializing children and;

"domesticating animals, by transforming animal products into food or by resocializing the *moran* into marriageable life after bush life, the house and its occupiers were in many ways mediators between 'nature' and 'culture'" (Cormack and Strathern 1980, cited in Talle 1987).

Maasai men normally did not have separate houses within the *enkang* but circulated among the houses of their wives and more or less took their meals and slept where it suited them. In many respects the husband was 'a visitor in his wife's house, as a son is in his mother's' (Talle 1987: 65). Males would never enter a house without notifying the owner. When not eating or else sleeping, the usual haunt of men was outside the house, in the cattle kraal or just behind the thorn bush in the immediate proximity of the homestead (*ibid*).

#### *7.5.2 Contemporary gender and housing issues*

Recently however, there have been changes in 'traditional' Maasai houses and 'modernization' of housing has become common. The changing residential pattern is reflected in the change in form and shape of houses and enclosures towards more permanent and stable building structures. Materials for such structures include corrugated iron, bricks, stones, tiles and so on. Permanent houses are also an indicator that the Maasai have abandoned their 'traditional' pastoral nomadism and adopted permanent settlements (Coast 2002, Seno and Shaw 2001, Talle 1988). Exogenous influences such as the state and NGOs such as the Shelter Forum in Kenya, have also played part in the transformation of housing. The state policy on housing aims at having all citizens in the country living in permanent houses, whether rented or privately owned. In general, the houses are becoming larger and more strongly built.

Changing house styles also represent a shift away from house-building being associated solely with women. My data from Kisaju village show that there were changing gender roles in terms of responsibility for the construction of houses and the procurement of building materials. As we have noted, studying gender roles has been shown to provide an appropriate indicator of the changes in the construction of masculinities in Africa. In Kisaju, 3 percent of the houses were constructed with permanent materials, 73 percent semi-permanent and 25 percent temporary. More specifically, materials for roofing were as follows, 3 percent tiles, 82 percent iron sheets, 6 percent grass thatch and 9 percent cow dung. The data further show that only 20 percent of the respondents reported that the main house was constructed by women, 75 percent by the men while 5 percent was by both (wife and husband). Thus in contrast to the *enkaji*, most modern houses are built by men using paid craftsmen, often of non-Maasai origin. It is becoming common for wealthier Maasai men to build stone brick houses with roofs of corrugated iron or tiles as status symbols. While we cannot dispute the fact that lack of traditional building materials is a contributing factor, the pressure to appear ‘modern’/ ‘developed’ is playing an important role in Kisaju as the following portrays:

“*Maendeleo* (development) is building good houses...some people have many livestock but use them for nothing. This is not “*maendeleo*”. *Maendeleo ni kutumia hiyo ngombe na kujenga nyumba nzuri* (development is using the cattle to build a good house)” (RM 25).

The cost of labour and building materials are usually the responsibility of men, who then regard themselves, and not their wives, as the owners of the concrete houses. As one respondent one 66 year old elder indicated:

“Today, we build houses because we use money... *sasa kazi ya kujenga niya wanaume* (now the task of building a house is for men)” (RM 17).

Talle (1988) explained that this exclusive possession is symbolized with a lock and a key, which the ‘owner’ either carries with him or leaves in the custody of the wife he trusts most. Interestingly, however, even if the husband builds himself a concrete house, he will not always be inclined to share it with his wife (or wives) (*ibid*). On the contrary, most men build

such houses for themselves; as what Talle (1988) calls ‘seats of the patriarch-cum-patron’, and they leave their wives to construct and reside in their own *inkajijit*. In contrast, I observed that many women were living with their husband in Kisaju. My general impression was that many Maasai women also preferred the permanent house to the *enkaji* to live in. Women however explain the advantages of permanent houses chiefly in terms of labour savings. Permanent structures relieved them from the perpetual smearing and plastering which keeps them busy especially during the rainy season. (They saw life to be far easier with an iron-sheet roof to keep the rain out. Talle (1988) had also made rather similar observations. Additionally, women viewed a concrete house as a sign of better living, because women residing in such houses are usually in quite wealthy families or were themselves quite wealthy.

Thus for Maasai men a ‘stone’ house has to some extent become a gendered symbol of status. A concrete house is often a prestigious investment by the elite such as owners of large herds, and those with high incomes in the public and/or the private sectors. Such a house provides a perfect place for them to aggrandize their recently acquired positions in the family and in the community. Many Maasai men indicated that a house was quite important on the list of the things they wished to own and a rich man is one who owned a good house:

“A rich person is one with livestock, has *built a big house*, has big land and has fenced...has everything...what does he lack? He has everything” (RM 23).

“A rich person is one who has a big portion of land, many livestock, a ‘good house’, a reliable one wife and many children” (RM 3).

“Characteristics of a rich person...He also has ‘a good stone house’ and vehicle (RM 10).

However some viewed the increased role of men to include building of houses in a negative light as this comment indicates:

“*Wanaume wamewezwa sana! – siku hizi ndio wanajenga nyumba- kazi ya wanawake! – zamani ilikuwa tu wanawake wenjenga nyumba na shuguli zingine za nyumba* (Men have been much oppressed! – nowadays they are the ones who build houses – women’s

work! – earlier, it was women who build houses and did other domestic chores)” (RM 16).

Explaining the difference between young Maasai men of today and those of yesteryears’ one said:

“*Manyatta* were built for *morans* by their mothers. Today, every young man has to build his own modern house” (RM 11).

Asked about what he wished to achieve in life, one man said:

“A family, good job and good ‘stone’ house...happy children with the maximum level of education, livestock and vehicle” (RM 34).

We can thus say that changes in housing have gendered implications. On the one hand, men’s responsibilities are increasing due to social expectations and other changes to provide housing that traditionally used to be the role of women. On the other hand, men are also appropriating this newfound responsibility and turning it into a source of some prestige so that the more ‘modern’ a house a man builds the more prestige he acquires. The modern (permanent) house is now viewed as a masculine status symbol, and we have seen and some respondents indicate that, given a choice, they would want to own and live in such a house. This however has another impact on masculinity since only a few can afford to build such houses given the prevailing high incidence of poverty. The many who cannot afford to construct such houses feel marginalized. This is yet another aspect of Maasai ‘modernity’ characterized by the wish to consume ‘modern’ goods and services and the inability to actualize such wishes.

### 7.5.3 Gender and domestic chores

“*Usho!* (alas!), there is no work for a man in the house. None!” (RM 11).

We have thus seen that many Maasai men are facing marginalization within the current socio-economic conditions. Discussions with men and women in Kisaju and Naserian however confirm that women are still mainly responsible for household activities such as homecare, childrearing, cooking, washing, cleaning utensils and fetching water and firewood. However, although women are generally responsible for these responsibilities, some men will carry

them out if needed as the gender-based division of labour becomes increasingly flexible as both men and women undertake productive and household responsibilities as need arises. When asked about their opinion on men performing domestic tasks, some of the responses included:

“We are in *“enkop ngeurk”* (new world) where everybody does everything and anything” (RM 36, young graduate, employed as a community worker).

“Nowadays, men can do everything in the house in the absence of the woman, but in the past men could not touch anything in the house” (RM 2, young man driver-single).

“Today, we do almost everything in the house, except washing napkins. It is not like our fathers’ times” (RM 5, married middle aged).

A pharmaceutical technologist -cum-livestock keeper concurs that:

“Nowadays men have many responsibilities than before, I do fetch firewood many times by hiring a pick-up van and buying the fuel. Many times I also pass through the market on my way home and buy things like vegetables and other foodstuffs”.

Some however felt that they could only perform such duties in the absence of their wives:

“There is a difference between a house with a wife and the one without. For a house with a wife, a man cannot cook but if the wife is not there, you have to cook for yourself. You can do washing and even sweep when forced to by circumstances” (RM 22)

Yet others, *including some women*, felt that performing domestic chores was a betrayal of manhood:

“Today’s young men can do all house have work because they are controlled by women but in our time, every housework was for wives” (RM 15, a senior elder in the village).

“Work in the house is for women only! But if my wife is sick, I help her get water or buy paraffin. If food is cold, I warm it. *Lakini kazi ya vyombo apana!* (But washing utensils, no!), *mimi natafuta unga na yeye anapea mimi chai* (me I look for maize flour and she serves me with tea)” (RM 17, a 66 year old man).

“Men have no business in the house, just to eat. Their work is out there” (RF 42, an elderly woman).

“‘Real men’ have no work in the house. Only men under wives’ control work in the kitchen” (RF 47, an elderly woman).

Some women however saw it as an impact of development on men:

“Development has brought good changes in the house. Today some men don’t beat their wives as in the past. They have also dropped some cultural practices as some men now do work in the kitchen to help their wives” (RF 38).

Many respondents held that it is becoming more common for women and men to undertake productive and reproductive tasks without considering whether they fall in the realms of men’s or women’s responsibilities. The long-distance women bead work traders who extend their reach to the coastal town of Mombasa, sometimes are absent from home for a couple of days. This has inevitably led many men to assume domestic duties when their wives are away. In poorer households, most men do not hesitate to take over the role of their wives in their absence, as the earnings are extremely valuable. The prevailing economic hardships many families are facing appear to have necessitated joint efforts to support the family. As seen above, many men will take on domestic chores only when it is absolutely necessary such as when the wife is sick or is away on a business trip. One respondent indicated that if he undertook such chores, he kept it a secret to avoid ridicule by other men (but he also indicated that being idle the whole day while there is something that he can do in the house was not fair- besides he was getting hungry and there was no one to cook for him or wash the utensils). Indeed, many studies have shown that men who have to cook for themselves are mocked in many societies (Jackson 1999: 96). Looking at this from the lenses of the theory of hegemonic masculinities, we can say that the persistence of such ideologies of male domination in labour relations perpetuate and reinforce men’s dominance over women. However, as we have noted above such ideologies are slowly getting eroded with changing times.

As we have also noted, this new masculine identity is challenged from various quarters by its close association with femininity and the domestic. Those who challenge it fear that such men are in danger of falling out of ‘properly’ masculine positions. Such fears are not new. In 19<sup>th</sup> century Britain for instance, one of the main aims of taking boys out of the home and into boarding schools was inspired by the fear that by staying at home as they grew up, they would

become effeminate and thus improperly masculine (Cohen 2004). We also noted earlier that Maasai *morán* spent many years in 'the bush' after circumcision and only returned when they were about to marry and settle down. Talle (1987, 1988), Hodgson (2001), and Lee-Smith (1997) have insisted that modernization has only resulted in Maasai men gaining control and prestige at the expense of women. I argue that while this may be the case in some instances, the situation is not as straightforward and some men have actually lost out and are teaming up with women as they explore new ways of being men.

## 7.6 Conclusion

This chapter reveals the picture of a people struggling for livelihood security under challenging conditions. For them, the ability to survive off the land has, to a large measure, disappeared. The adaptive strategies employed by both men and women were noted to be creative and practical, centring on the physical and social environment and on gender roles. They included pastoral supportive activities such as crop farming, migration and adopting reciprocal relationships in grazing patterns. Increasing penetration of the market has provided them with an outlet, as they now sell among others, both cattle (and cattle products) and labour for cash. In general, individual economic and social interests have diverged progressively through the adoption of new lifestyles and changing aspirations. Thus instead of a community characterised by a relative homogeneity of interest (pastoralism), there has emerged a heterogeneous community of crop farmers, livestock keepers, entrepreneurs, civil servants, landless etc.

In the two study sites, residents have adopted various livelihood strategies in an effort to deal with this marginalization. Their reactions to social-economic dislocation appear to be gendered experiences. Many men for instance, are striving to overcome their marginalization by seeking to reclaim their masculinity through avenues related to Maasai pre-colonial



masculinities, through engagement in tasks that relate to the pastoral way of life such as cattle trading and trekking, herding and being employed as night guards. For the majority however, the 'crisis' still persists, as they are unable to fulfill the obligations they have for long shared with women of providing their families' upkeep or to be successful pastoralists. Women's expanded roles in economic activity were often identified by respondents as intersecting closely with increased monetisation and urbanisation. Indeed, women seem to have taken up more of the men's obligations as they now take care of much of the family budget from their engagement with the market. Some men felt some uneasiness about their wives new found power in the house and their perceived loss of power and privilege. This in itself have further aggravated some men's sense of 'crisis' as they feel that they are losing control of their families through the erosion of their authority as household heads. It appears that there is a re-positioning of power and control in the domestic sphere. In some families, tensions between modernity and tradition were noted in the enactment of gender roles within the household. Some men were noted to be re-inventing tradition to construct and reclaim their perceived loss of power in the household and thus their identity.

Within the household, men as individuals are beginning to adopt greater sharing and balance in the house and in particular assuming more roles in housework. Indeed, the gender-based division of labour is becoming increasingly flexible as both men and women undertake productive and household responsibilities as need arise. We can conclude that by becoming homemakers, such men are challenging the female nature of the houses and actively loosening the dualism of man/woman. We have however noted that while some men have welcomed the change in their relationships and are re-worked their sense of themselves as men within the domestic arrangement, others are getting defensive.

All in all, we can also say that there is a positive change in as far as gender relations are concerned as increasingly, both women and men come to appreciate the non-essentialist

notion of gender relations where both men and women perform roles, not because they are necessarily been associated with either sex, but because it is reasonable, given the prevailing circumstances, to do so. In this sense, the changes that are happening can be viewed as empowering to both men and women. We can finally conclude that there are now more complex and layered identities among the Maasai.

## **Chapter Eight: ‘New masculinities?’ Changing Institutions, Practices and attitudes**

### **8.1 Introduction**

In this chapter, I further dwell on the changes in institutions related to Maasai masculinities and the ‘crises’ that these changes entail. I continue to demonstrate that the changes in the expressions of gender and masculinity are embedded within the wider context of development. In order to understand the issues pertaining to masculinities more comprehensively, it is important that we analyse the institutions as well as cultures and practices that relate to masculinities (White 1997). Accordingly, I will deal with institutions such as marriage, the school, the church, and practices such as circumcision and the *orng’esherr*. I will thus continue to show that there are multiple versions of masculinity that are shaped in complex ways by social class, sex, age, religious, educational and other factors. More precisely, the chapter commences with a discussion about the emerging concerns pertaining to the boy-child. This is followed by an examination of the factors that have influenced the production of *moranhoo*d masculinity such as religion, the state, elites, formal education and contemporary circumcision. I then focus on the controversies generated by modern marriages and girl-child issues. Finally, I discuss a case study of the rite of passage from *moranhoo*d to elderhood, the *Orng’esherr* ceremony, held in Kisaju village in 2003. All in all, this chapter again teases out the multiple nature of the production and performances of contemporary Maasai masculinities and such issues as the ambivalences and contradictions surrounding these productions and performances.

### **8.2 From Boy to Man**

In this section, I focus on the boy-child issues, the transition from boyhood to manhood and the marginalization of the *manyatta*, formerly a very important institution in the production of

Maasai masculinities. The roles of the church, the state, the Maasai elite and formal education and how they have impacted upon masculinities, are also discussed.

### *8.2.1 The boy-child concerns*

In this sub-section, I bring out some emerging concerns about the Maasai boy-child and situate such concerns within the wider discussion of the crisis of masculinities among the Maasai. One common approach now in the study of masculinities is to investigate how masculinities vary through men's lives by focusing on, for example, boyhood, adolescence and the experience of the elderly (Asinyanbora 2001). Schenk (1999: 7) also informs us that: "being a part of a male gender has definite consequences for boys". While Frances Cleaver points out that one of the ways in which a crisis of masculinity is manifested is through "low attainment of boys in school" (2002: 3). In Chapter Four, we saw that the roles and responsibilities of Maasai men varied according to their age grade, a set of life stages that men moved through as part of their age-groups. We also noted that Maasai masculinity embraced a range of masculinities cross-cut by generations which were arranged in a particular age-group system whereby they conceived such age-groups as passing through four named stages of the male life cycle, the first of which was 'boyhood', *Ilaiyiok*. As we have also noted, before the advent of formal western education, young uncircumcised Maasai boys herded, first calves and small stock and later, as they grew up, cattle. From discussions and observation in my study sites, many of the boys were attending school and only got involved in herding over the weekends and during school holidays. In essence then, there is a temporal and spatial dimension in changes pertaining to the enactment of their gender and therefore masculine roles in Maasai society.

There have been some rising concerns about the plight of the boy-child in Maasailand according to my informants. In section 6.3.3.2 we noted that, to survive drought, the Maasai have established and maintained reciprocal relationships with their nearby and distant

relatives and friends. For instance, according to a senior research officer with the NGO, MAAP, young boys in the community are being increasingly denied a chance to go to school because they are occasionally called upon to accompany adult men as they go herding in distant places in such times of severe environmental distress. His sentiments were also echoed by the youth organization, (Young People in Cross-fire), an affiliate of MAAP, in discussions with some of its members. This phenomenon is becoming common owing to the frequency of drought and the unavailability of adequate dry season grazing land and the fact that a number of families are unable to employ herdsmen. Some boys thus have to get involved in the movement of cattle during such dry spells in search of water and pastures at the expense of their education. Recently, a senior official of the Ministry of Education in Kenya listed 'child labour', *moranism* and early marriages as having frustrated the new free-education program in Maasailand (The Daily Nation Newspaper, 14-07-04). One of the teachers at Nado-Enterit Primary School in Kisaju whom I interviewed during the December 2003 Christmas school holidays when the study area had been hit by a severe drought, indicated that:

"We expect a number of our students to be late in reporting back to school in January 2004 since they have moved far away with the family herds in search of pastures. This has now become quite common any time we have such a severe drought and many boys' education is interfered with" (RM 76).

One of my informants also pointed out to me that:

"One of my younger brothers had to skip school for one year to help in looking for pasture during the drought in the year 2000" (RM 3).

The letter below, written to the editor of one of the nationally circulating daily newspapers in Kenya, (The Daily Nation Newspaper, 08-05-2003) also attests to this growing concern:

"A lot of emphasis has been put on girl-child education excluding boys. Many women's organizations have embarked on a spirited campaign dwelling on the need to educate girls. Among the Maasai, for instance, many organisations are duplicating efforts advocating girl-child education, arguing that girls are neglected by their communities and being forced to undergo genital mutilation. But this concentration on girls has made many boys turn to *moranism* since nobody cares about them. Why the double standards?"

While there was no indication in my study area that boys were turning to *moranism* as the above letter alleges, the issues raised in the letter may be viewed as corroborating the concerns raised by others about the Maasai boy-child. As indicated elsewhere in this chapter, *moranism* is still prevalent albeit on a relatively lower scale in some parts of Maasailand in Kenya, particularly the southern and western parts.

Figures available from the Kajiado District Development Plan for 2002 – 2008 period (Kenya 2002) also indicate that although total school enrolment for boys was higher than that of girls at the district level, the drop-out rates for boys was higher than those of girls at all levels. At pre-primary level, figures were 23.2% and 16.6% for boys and girls respectively, while the drop-out rates were 8.5% for boys and 6.27% for girls at primary school level. At the secondary level on the other hand, the drop-out rates were 1.7 % and 0.75% for boys and girls respectively. The trend was also the same at adult literacy level where drop-out rates for men was 191 out of 515 while for women, the figure was 176 out of 668. In addition, the Kajiado District Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) consultative report for the Period 2001 – 2004 indicates that all participants at the PRSP consultative process ranked low levels of education as the highest contributing factor to poverty in the District. Other contributing factors include pastoralist way of life, which include high mobility and ‘child labour’ (Kenya 2001: 180).

The concern being raised here is that, should this trend continue, more and more boys will miss out in education. I raised this issue with the Head Teacher of the relatively new Baraka Oontonyie Secondary School (a Catholic Sponsored girls-only school in Kisaju Village), and her opinion was that their main concern was with the girl-child whose future was made uncertain by traditional practices of early marriage and clitoridectomy or Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) as some refer to it. Initially, girls were married off when young but now the Government, NGOs and other activists have fought for the girl-child’s education. Girls are thus mainly targeted because their education is most likely to be jeopardized by early

marriages. There are indeed numerous organizations that sponsor girls' education in the study area such as 'Companion', which is run by the Anglican Church of Kenya and the Baptist Church. They sponsor many Maasai children from nursery school to college. With about 200 children under the programme, 70 percent are girls. Indeed according to the one of the officials, their main target is educating girls.

Elsewhere, related trends in the deterioration of boys' educational attainment over time have been noted. In her study on the implications of socio-economic change in Lesotho on gender, men and development, Caroline Sweetman (2002: 40) observed that:

“There was an emerging a problem of a ‘forgotten generation’ of male children, who herd animals rather than receive an education, and, will grow up to find that unskilled jobs in minework no longer exist”.

The significance of this section in the context of the study of Maasai masculinities is that it points to a situation which may aggravate the prevailing crisis of masculinity so far discussed as some boys will mature into men and find themselves in disadvantaged positions. As we have seen in chapter seven, the relative disadvantage the Maasai suffered in the past in terms of limited access to formal education have resulted in many of them experiencing a crisis of masculinity. In this sense then the boy-child concerns can be seen as part of the wider crisis of masculinity which ought to be addressed even as the girls' plight seems quite urgent.

#### *8.2.2. The 'new moran': the manyatta and new pathways to manhood*

After Kenya's independence in 1963, an interplay of factors have combined and continued to undermine the 'traditional' *moranhoo*d identity and the prestige it previously enjoyed in Maasai society. It has been suggested that measuring changes in *moranism* provides an important tool with which to assess changes within Maasai society (Coast 2002). Indeed, the masculine identity of the *moran* was viewed as an impediment to governance by the colonial administration while the independent Kenyan state regards the *moran's* cultural identity as a

barrier to national and regional development; “a potential menace to law and order mainly because of their reputation as fierce cattle-raiders and ‘trouble makers’” (Talle 1988: 96). The Christian Church (as we shall see) also views this identity as anachronistic to the teachings of the Bible. In this section, I thus focus on the role of the Christian religion, the state, Maasai elites and formal education as they impacted on the masculine identity of the *morán*. While these factors are treated separately for the sake of clarity, in reality they are closely related and indeed do overlap, as for instance the state offers education in state institutions and to a large extent determines the educational curriculum. Churches also offer education in the many church-sponsored schools.

While still very important symbolically and socially, the ‘active’ role of being a *morán* (e.g. defending property) is no longer important on a day-to-day basis. In Kisaju and its environs, I gathered that there has been no extended *moranism* and the last initiation group in which some members stayed over a relatively long period of time in the *manyatta* ended in 1987. We have seen that in Maasailand, it is in Kajiado District and Ngong in particular where the first ‘development inputs’ especially in the form of land reforms were first instituted. We have also seen that these ‘developments’ have led to pronounced changes in the livelihoods and lifestyles of many. It also appears that the cultural institution of the *manyatta* is fast disappearing in the study area. Indeed, Maasai from other parts of Kajiado District now view the Maasai of Ngong as being ‘too modernized’ to be called Maasai as the sociologist Mukhisa Kituyi observes:

“Forces of change have led to greater entrenchment into the market economy among the northern Maasai (near Nairobi), and a common expression by their southern cousins is that ‘*Iloshon* to the north are no longer Maasai’” (1993: 133).

One male respondent in Kisaju village also explained that:

“If we look at the issue closely, it is the government and the church that finished *moranism* here. The government jail the *morán* if they raid cattle. It wants the *morán* to go to school. The church also say cattle raiding is stealing and against the bible. Again the church is against sex before marriage which was an ordinary thing among the *morán*. They say it is a sin, in our culture it was not seen as a bad thing” (RM 19).



#### 8.2.2.1: Christianity: 'New moral beacon'?

"History has shown that religion can be, and has been used as a tool to alienate and discriminate...it has also been used to liberate and to restore people's life and dignity" (Wamue 2001: 453).

Based on the above quotation, I examine the impact of The Christianity faith on *moranism*. Christian faith has been instrumental in reformulating the gender ideology of the Maasai and now provides the moral framework within which many men locate their changing practices. As we have noted in section 6.3.1 of this thesis, Christianity is the dominant religion in the study area with 89 percent of respondents identifying with the Christian faith. From postcolonial theoretical perspectives, these effects can be seen as the modern day reality of the values, beliefs, and institutions that were introduced to the colonial world and one way in which colonialism lives on in 'certain categories and procedures of knowledge' (Dirks 2004 25).

Many *morans* have now embraced education and Christianity as alternative routes to the acquisition of masculine power and identity. Christianity in particular has played a major role in the changing of pre-colonial *moranhood* identity by coding some aspects of this identity as immoral. For example, among the Ten Commandments, two of them prohibit fornication and theft. As has been earlier noted, bravery and sexual virility were highly valued attributes of *moranhood* masculinity in their value system. Prohibiting the *moran* from associating with the unmarried girls ('fornicating') curtails the masculine value of virility. Indeed, Christianity is totally opposed to any form of sexual liaison before marriage. Christian religion, in its 'enlightenment mission', itself part of the wider development discourse, has introduced totally alien standards of morality, which have undermined and problematized Maasai sexuality and subsequently their masculine ideals. By privileging such Christian masculine identities, other forms are implicitly subordinated. It is no wonder then that Christianity has been said to contribute to the apparent decline of *moranism*. However, some *morans* have

appropriated Christianity as a coping strategy in an effort to survive the changing and uncertain times, thus changing their practices. As one youthful small-scale trader put it:

“To be saved is a great thing for me. I do not squander the little earnings I get from trading in small stock by taking beer and other drugs. But some people look at the saved young men like me as cowards who are not ready to do dangerous things” (RM 05).

While this respondent used his Christian identity instrumentally, he also feels that this identity is seen by some of his age-mates as making him ‘soft’. One can speculatively conclude that this view by some of his age-mates derives from the cultural discourse of the Maasai *morán* as a fierce warrior.

#### 8.2.2.2: ‘Hegemonic pressures’? The State and Maasai elite

From a general perspective, Kituyi (1993) has observed that the physical process of becoming Kenyans by acquiescing to Kenyan government authority is an important process in Maasai history. More specifically, some state policies have been directed at changing or doing away altogether with the *manyatta* system. In many parts of Maasailand in Kenya, the *manyatta* system has disappeared mainly as a result of the national and local government pressures on the Maasai to get rid of the process and period of *moránhood* altogether.

“Some of these pressures have come from ridicule and criticism of being ‘primitive’, ‘backward’ and ‘resistant to change and development’ published in the national press and discussed on the national radio; pressure to send their children to school applied through local government chiefs and administrative officials; pressure due to rapid population growth in the district and the collective *diminution of the available grazing land and other resources -saltlicks for the cattle and dryland grazing areas*” (Holland 1996: 174-5).

Some of the pressure comes from within Maasai society itself, especially from elites who wish to see the Maasai drop the trappings of what are perceived to be outdated traditions and instead embrace modern practices of education and employment. In the Second Conference on the future of Maasai pastoralists in Kajiado District in 1991 for example, one of the most well known Maasai post-colonial Kenyan politicians, John Keen, singled out the Maasai warriorhood system as ‘a great bottleneck to development of the people’, and blamed men for

not being fully engaged in productive activities, leaving the burden of household chores and home management to women (Sindiga 1992: 101). In the Kenya Government authored 'Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper covering 2001-2004' for Kajiado District, *moranism* is also identified as one of the obstacles to the achievement of development goals in the area (Kenya 2001). Efforts to eliminate *moranism*, especially by government officials, continue to date (The Daily Nation Newspaper, 14-07-04). What we see here is the rhetoric of development being used to subordinate Maasai masculinities based on *moranhood* ideals we discussed in Chapter Four.

The state has also developed controls over the expression of the *moran* masculine ideal of bravery previously expressed through cattle raiding, the defence of property, and the hunting of lions. Kenyan law is very strict in curbing cattle raiding and the crime is normally punished with a seven-year jail term and the death sentence if accompanied with violence. In pre-colonial Maasai society, cattle-raiding was culturally not seen (by the Maasai) as 'theft' in the Western accepted sense of a misdemeanour or crime but a state of ambition or need and an honourable and courageous act rather than a moral or social flaw. Prohibiting the *moran* from raiding meant the removal of a traditionally exalted masculine performance.

The active role of being a *moran* in defending property is also no longer tenable as the maintenance of social order is now the prerogative of the state, which has gradually established a monopoly over socially legitimate forms of violence. In the past, perhaps there was reason enough for certain negative attitudes towards the *moran* and their activities, especially cattle raiding (as we have earlier observed). However, even though the government frowns on *moranhood*, it also uses its image to attract tourists, which points to some ambivalence on the part of the state, which is akin to the state exploiting the cultural value of the Maasai and giving little, if anything, in exchange. In general then, we again see the role of

the state in its interference with the gender identity of the Maasai as it changes the construction of particular masculine identities.

#### 8.2.2.3 'The school is the new *manyatta*'

A School Leaving Certificate rather than circumcision may yet become the mark of *moranhoo* (Buxter 1993: ix).

As we have noted earlier, *moranism* was regarded very highly and many Maasai boys had their formal educational pursuits interfered with in order to participate in the custom as the following account of an elder in Kisaju attests:

"I was born in 1939 and started school in 1945 at Loiyangaroni School where I did my Common Entrance Examination. I passed and went to the government school in Narok, the only secondary school then among the Maasai. I finished and was admitted to Alliance High School. However, the elders refused me to continue with my education since I would forfeit *moranism*. I thus abandoned my education for some years and only later did a two-year course in Veterinary Services at Ngong – then worked in other places, Kakamega and Busia" (RM 19).

In contemporary times, *moranism* has taken on new meanings as many now see it in the modern form as 'the school':

"Today's men are educated...school have become *moranism*- *moranism* has been seen as a waste of time and resources" (RM 81, senior *moran* and a milk-seller).

"Young men of today have all gone to school but in the past it was herding and *moranism*" (RM 04).

Some elders contrasted the days when they were *moran* and today's *moran*:

"We were serious *morans* and our main economic contribution was raiding for cattle from neighbouring communities. The whole '*olporror*' was under the control of the *olpiron*" (RM 06).

"*Moranism* was the main order of life for the young men, but today, education is compulsory. There were traditional counsellors but today counselling is done at school" (RM 09, a senior elder).

Emphasising the centrality of education one elder with young children from a third wife said:

"I no longer need to achieve more because I am already old and comfortable with who I am. But my children should have more education" (RM 11).

Indeed, the institution of *manyatta* and *moranism* as a way of life for men of the *moran*-age have to a big extent disappeared as one *moran* age-group man confirms:

“*Moranism* has to a large extent ended and the school has substituted it” (RM 12)

In a way then, the Maasai have appropriated the school and interpreted it in the light of their tradition; as the new *manyatta*. Here, education can be seen as privileging a certain masculinity associated with being literate and possibly getting a job in the formal sector. In the context of the theory of hegemonic masculinities, western education can be seen as creating some kind of hegemony and subordination for those who are able to acquire it and those who are not, respectively. This way, modernization can be seen as having, to an extent, reformulated Maasai indigenous masculine ideology. As we have already noted, the Kenyan state views education as an important aspect of the development agenda.

In general therefore, by sending their children to school, and by working hard, parents/guardians are fulfilling a modern Maasai ideal and national ideals about fighting ‘ignorance’ through education. As one of the respondents puts it:

“The Maasai nowadays especially in this area have taken education very seriously... people have to work hard to educate their children. “*Kwa hii Kenya mpya, ndio kitu ile ya maana* (In this ‘new’ Kenya, it is the main thing). I hope to educate mine up to university so that they can get good jobs” (RM 27).

The above respondent seems to suggest that it is unmanly not to take ones’ children to school. Education is even seen as a product of development and educational pursuits are being reframed within the rhetoric of development as the following observation indicates: “One important impact of development is that it has brought schools and our children can read and write” (RM 09). In general therefore formal education, itself a state development objective and which many Maasai have embraced, has replaced *moranhood* masculinity previously nurtured in the *manyatta*. It is increasingly acknowledged that childhood socialization and what people learn from their parents, teachers and religious figures plays a critical role in shaping identities (Chant and McILwaire 1998). The church, school and the state have

brought about many changes in the way people perceive and act out masculinity in the study area.

#### 8.2.2.2 'Men of the needle!': contemporary *emuratare*

Other than the *manyatta*, *emuratare*, the rite of passage from boyhood to manhood has not remained untouched. In many Kenyan communities, circumcision is still critical to male identity and even men from previously non-circumcising groups are now often opting for it. This trend has particularly been hastened by medical reports to the effect that uncircumcised men are more predisposed to HIV/AIDS infection than their circumcised counterparts. Chapter Four of this thesis portrayed the power of masculine gender ideology and its close relation to the practice of *emuratare*, among the Maasai: "Circumcision was the most important social event in the life of the Maasai" (Sassi 1979: 34). This masculine discourse still, to an extent, circulates in the area. Indeed, male circumcision is still symbolically important in making a boy a full adult man and is inextricably linked to both Maasai male gender identity and to ethnicity. However, the symbolic valency of circumcision as a masculine marker seems to be taking on new meanings, which exposes some men to the possibility of failure and feeling of disappointment. In the fairly recent past, a 'crisis' has been generated in this practice as many boys in Kisaju and other surrounding villages are now getting circumcised in the hospital under local anaesthesia. This started in 1985 and is performed by a clinical officer at a clinic in the nearby small town of Isinya. This 'modern' circumcision has experienced stigmatisation as it is seen by some as watering down the meaning of circumcision which is associated with bravery, manifested in persevering the extreme pain during the operation. Those who have been initiated in this new way have been ridiculed and referred to as 'men of the needle'. The metaphor of the 'needle' is derived from the needles used to inject the initiates with anaesthetic. They have been particularly targeted for ridicule as some of them informed me:

“Those people who had earlier been circumcised at home by a traditional circumciser are very proud of themselves and boasts that they ‘met the knife face to face’ or they ‘faced the knife in the morning’...without any injection like in the hospital. They feel that they are braver and are ‘more of men’ than some of us” (Group Discussion, Kisaju)

“My elder brother tells me how they were taunted for being among the first to get the cut in hospital (RM 03).

“They see those of us circumcised in the hospital not as real men of their age-set and refer to us as ‘men of the needle’” (RM 57).

Such men were clearly hurt by such innuendos as they felt that their masculinity was called into question and even doubted.

However, I also came to gather that the stigma attached to this ‘modern’ rite of passage is slowly thawing as more and more young men now go to the hospital for this initiation and increasingly see themselves as positively different: “as more civilized” (RM 84). Indeed, this ‘modern’ rite is being increasingly associated with modern education and Christian values. As is shown elsewhere in this thesis, masculinity associated with education and modern lifestyles is becoming the contemporary dominant (read hegemonic) mode of masculine expression. Such men can be seen as appropriating the discourse of ‘development’ to enhance their status in society. Some opponents of the initial (‘traditional’) rite argued that this mode of *emuratare* had no place in modern life. As one church elder quipped:

“The old rite of passage to adulthood should be done away with as the boys who undergo the ritual are made to withstand lot of unnecessary pain” (RM 19).

Another respondent said:

“Circumcision is in the head...in the modern world, a real man is the one who uses his brain and hands to make it in life” (RM 50).

Here, we see two competing masculine identities coexisting rather uncomfortably, one deploying ‘culture’ to claim a superior masculine identity and the other identifying with ‘modernity’ to make similar claims. The fact that men in the study area have attained their masculine identity associated with circumcision through different routes has brought some conflicts and divisions amongst them, which can be read as a ‘crisis’. The two ideals can also

be viewed as competing for hegemonic status. It also confirms the existence of a multiplicity of masculine identities which can be, to an extent, attributed to the influx of modernity.

Suffice also to mention that the controversy surrounding the 'modern' circumcision is not restricted to the Maasai people in Kenya. Among the Ameru people of eastern Kenya for example, the 'traditional' circumcision is a rite of passage to adulthood, which is treasured and more valued than the conventional circumcision done in hospitals:

"It is considered a disgrace for any parent to have his son circumcised at a modern health facility. Any initiate who undergoes the conventional 'cut' at a health facility is ridiculed and referred to as *kiroge* – meaning he has been sedated to escape the pain that others endure during the rite of passage to manhood. Such young initiates are regarded as outcasts, 'half men' and are not allowed to associate with initiates who undergo the traditional circumcision" (The Kenya Times Newspaper, 20-11-04).

What is clear from the foregone discussion is that modernisation has had profound impacts on Maasai male gender identities resulting in even more complex multitude of masculinities (and the attendant crises). Let us now focus on women.

## **8.1 Marriage and the Girl-Child issues**

"For a Maasai man, a wife is essential. She will provide him with offsprings, milk his cows, prepare his food and keep house for him. A wife is, in fact, a prerequisite for a man to be constructed as a person (Talle 1988: 145).

Another issue that has generated a lot of interest and controversy is that of modern marriages in Maasailand. In this section, I discuss the respondents' views on the dynamics of the institution and practice of marriage, which, especially the issue of early marriages, have received a lot of publicity in recent times.

### **8.2.1 Modern marriages**

"Marriage to a Maasai is not a romantic affair alone, but also a practical solution offering a man and a woman opportunity to raise a family, provide security in old age, and to carry on the family name and inheritance" (Ole Saibul and Carr 1981: 88).

More and more young people are now practicing new ways of loving. They call for a type of marriage based on romantic love, linked to the rhetoric of modernization of family life. Such



rhetoric of family renewal has however been known since colonial times through attacks on Maasai sexuality by the colonial authorities for instance (see section 5.3.4). In this section, we again see the impacts of the role of the state and Christian ideals on the organization of gender relations among the Maasai. It may then be instructive to note at this juncture that the Kenya Government (2001) in the Kajiado District PRSP Consultative paper for the period 2001-2004 mentions 'negative social and cultural practices' pertaining to gender as some of the causes of poverty in district. More specifically, it lists polygamy and early forced marriages as some of the main contributing factors here. As we have seen, many residents of Kisaju are Christians and thus increasingly today, many marriages are Christian marriages. Talle (1988) had earlier noted that the educated Maasai aimed at having a marriage on the western model as shaped by the Kenyan middle class. Monogamy, as the church prescribes, is becoming the norm and many partners are marrying their choices after some voluntary courtships. This indicates a distinct shift from the Maasai pastoral cultural model discussed in Chapter Four. As one of the elderly women informants indicated:

"In our time, girls were married immediately after being initiated. When graduating from "*inkaibartak*", (age-set of initiates still sick), the husband is there waiting. They were then married off, when clean-shaven, immediately after the graduation ceremony" (RF 32).

Others opined that:

"Today, *olmurrani odol entito* (the young man looks for his bride), not the parents as in the past" (RF 35, a wife to a junior elder).

"In the past, the *moran* followed our culture. Wedding was the choice of the father. The wife was booked when very young. You would have to marry her even if she was not your choice. The girls could also not object to the choice of the parent for a marriage partner. Nowadays, one chooses for him/herself even if parents do not want. It is for young men and women to choose for themselves because they love each other" (RM 25).

This change is further illustrated by an elder who pointed out that:

"Young men could only marry with the consent of their parents while today you can marry even without parents' knowledge" (RM 08)

The respondents closely associated these changes with modernization. Asked what the impact of development to his community has been, a middle aged man and a livestock keeper had this to say:

“Today, marriage is different from how it used to be in our culture. Parents would find a husband for their daughter, but nowadays a woman looks for a husband or the man and the woman look for each other” (RM 16).

He however saw this as a major cause of family instability and challenges to men, as their wives leave them since, in his opinion, they have little control over them. He explained:

“The bad thing is that if they quarrel a bit, the wife runs away from home because she is the one who looked for her husband. Again, if the wife is beaten a bit by the husband, she runs away and the husband is left in problems” (RM 16).

The impression here is that the wife does not feel ‘owned’ by the husband, as she is the one who ‘looked for’ the husband. This suggests that men in such marriages were feeling they were in already compromised masculine power positions. It also shows that the structure of power relations is changing with this new arrangement and the patriarchal power of men has been eroded by this arrangement. Some saw this as the source of ‘disrespect’ to husbands by their wives:

“Respect has disappeared because girls look for husbands. But on the other hand, parents have no option but to respect the girls’ choice” (RM 17, a 66 year old elder).

In this study, modern notions of masculinity can thus be understood in the context of the changing social context of the practice of marriage. As Miescher and Lindsay (2003: 7) have pointed out:

“Notions of masculinity can be approached as expressions of social practice to be observed within specific historical context, as practice also reproduces and transforms gender systems”.

Some respondents saw such changes in a positive light when in particular referring to the changes in the Maasai cultural ideal of monogamy as the comment below shows:

“Our culture is very nice but if we follow western culture it is bad but even some aspects of our culture are not good such as marrying many wives” (CRM 19).

T N K: “Why?”

CRM19: “It gets very hard to educate all the children”.

There is a hint of disappointment for the potential inability to cater for many children's education and other needs which, if it were possible, would have been a great source of pride and prestige. Indeed, for many poor young men who are not yet married, there is considerable wariness about doing so and thus exacerbating their sense of 'crisis'. As one junior elder in my study confessed;

"I am a junior elder but not married because of lack of dowry...I have not planned myself. Initially, if one could not afford dowry, the community could help him...today's weddings are also very costly" (RM 34).

However, some saw dowry itself as problematic. As a one woman informant put it:

"Most men take wives to be just instruments of working and using at home...they are human beings. It is no wonder...some say they bought their wives...so dowry should be abolished to avoid this. Let "*isireta*" (sugar for symbolizing booking) be there, but not cows which show that a woman is bought" (RF: 38).

Talle (1988) had also earlier observed that increase in bridewealth was making it difficult for men to get married quickly with the result that some of them especially those with fewer means, remaining unmarried far beyond marriage age. Sons of wealthier families, on the other hand, often contracted their first marriage only a few years after their circumcision (*ibid*). Thus not every man who wished to get married or have many wives and derive the prestige that would have accrued from this, years ago, can afford it given the challenges of bringing up the children in an environment of the ever-increasing wants and diminishing means.

### 8.3.2 *The issue of 'early marriages'*

This is an issue that has received a lot of media attention with the Government Officials, NGOs, Churches and other 'stakeholders' fighting to eliminate the practice. Indeed, in 2001 the government, through an act of parliament, declared the practices of marrying off schoolgirls and Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) to be illegal. According to the Parliamentary Bill, those who practice FGM and those who marry underage children risk a 12-month jail term or a Ksh 50,000 fine or both if convicted (Kipuri 2004). The penalty is

faced by not only those convicted of FGM and child marriages but also those who deny children an education (*ibid*).

One of most well known local efforts has been through a scheme initiated by Ms Nangura, the Headmistress of A.I.C. Girls Primary School, who started 'rescuing' girls from 'early marriages' in 1992. The scheme operates in this girls' boarding school and serves the whole of Kajiado District. People report cases of girls who have been forced out of school and she mobilizes the government administration and the girls are 'rescued', if necessary by force. The rescued girls remain in the school both during school time and during school holidays and when they complete their primary school education, they go to high school and eventually to college through the scheme. One of the women from Kisaju who is involved in the scheme explained:

"The scheme is organized by a group of women who export Maasai artwork through some connections with importers from abroad, mainly America. We search for sponsors of Maasai girls who have been rescued from early marriages. They are normally sponsored from primary school through high school to the university for those who can make it. Now we have 58 girls in the scheme and one of the Girls is now at The Catholic University in Langata"

One of my key informants, a teacher of long experience, also narrated to me how he had been 'rescuing' schoolgirls from such marriages. In 2003 for instance, he 'rescued' two girls after they had been married in a related fashion. He explained:

"But in both cases, I had to pay the respective suitors a goat each for interfering with the affairs of an elder, as culture demands. But I know this was worth the effort and most people in the community are behind such efforts as they have now come to appreciate the value of educating both boys and girls" (CRM 84).

The media in Kenya has been quite instrumental in publicizing the issue of early marriages through the publication of numerous reports that highlight the plight of the girl-child among the Maasai and other pastoral communities. The Daily Nation Newspaper for example featured an article on the 24<sup>th</sup> of February 2004 entitled 'Saved from the arms of elderly suitors' in which a 14 year-old-girl who had topped her class (in Naning'oi Girls Boarding

Primary School in Kajiado District) in the national examination and was preparing to join high school, had been married off to a 70 year old man as his fourth wife. Determined to let the girl pursue her dream of going to the university and becoming a doctor, her former school's management committee, the area chief, and some sympathisers resolved to convince her husband to free her from the marriage. After long drawn-out negotiations, during which they lavished the old man with all manners of gifts to soften his stance, he relented and agreed to let go of the girl, but on condition that she returned to him on completion of her studies.

Some of the instances have been quite dramatically enacted. For instance in October 2004, The Daily Nation Newspaper covered a story where more than 200 schoolgirls mounted a house-to-house search for their colleague, said to have been abducted and married off the previous week:

“Students of Engare Nairoua Girls Secondary School and deputy headmistress Rose Lempak started the search at 5 am. Armed with clubs, the girls moved from home to home, catching villagers by surprise. The students said they would stop at nothing until their schoolmate, who is in Form Two, was rescued and resumed classes”.

However, even with such efforts, the practice is still prevalent and many girls are still being married off to elderly suitors as a result of prior arrangements between the suitors and the girls' parents. The Head Teacher of Baraka Oontonyie Girls High School in Kisaju for example informed me that she had ‘lost’ some three girls in 2003 to the practice. Said the Head teacher:

“What often happens is that the girls get impregnated during school vacations and since school rules do not allow girls to turn up to school while pregnant, their parents or guardians find a reason for marrying them off.”

What all this evidence indicates is that some elders still conform to the dictates of the cultural masculine ethos of polygamy. While my aim here is not to pass judgement on the morality or otherwise of the practice, we may note that the curbing of the early marriages is being done in the name of ‘development’ as seen in educational attainment of girls. The conflicts that this generates can be seen as a wider component of the ‘crisis’ of masculinity as for many men,

the otherwise culturally available source of masculine prestige, previously more easily attainable from marrying many wives, is no longer easily available to them. Indeed, making it illegal for elders to marry young mature girls can be seen as an assault on their masculinity. It also resonates with the supposedly benevolent interventionism of the colonial state when certain practices were discouraged in the name of rescuing women from men as seen in Chapter Five. However, there is no denying the fact that many girls' chances of having an education and possibly more control over their lives are being and have been enhanced by the efforts to curb the said early marriages.

All said and done, the institution of marriage is still quite highly regarded as a gateway to gaining masculine status and subsequently power to be a leader as the case of the election of the Member of Parliament (MP) for Kajiado South Constituency in October 2003 showed. Mr Ole Katoo the then 29 years old MP, had to marry hurriedly during the campaign time at the insistence of the elders since, in their view, according to Maasai culture, he could not lead people while unmarried.

#### **8.4 'From *Moran* to Elder': The 2003 Kisaju *Orng'esherr* Case Study Ceremony**

In this section, I again show how modernization, particularly but not exclusively, education and Christian religion, altered the way an important ceremony of gaining a culturally valued masculine identity. The last age-set's initiation ceremony among the Maasai is the *Orng'esherr* in which senior *morans* attain of the status of a junior elders. We have seen that among the Maasai, ideally, elders held the highest masculine status in the community and thus this rite of passage/ceremony where the *morans* gained this masculine identity was highly regarded. The extents to which Christianity and western education have changed this cultural practice were rather evident.

This particular ceremony lasted for about three months, from September to the end of November 2003 when the two sub-age sets, the *Ilkipali* and the *Ilmajeshi* from the left-hand were united into a composite age-set and given a new name, *Ilkishomo*. Two opposing camps emerged within the wider community, the first one argued for continuity (the ceremony to be carried out the way it had been done in the past) and the other was for change and used the rhetoric of ‘development’ (western education and Christian ideals) to counter the views of the first group. The latter view was championed by a Christian elder while the former was championed by the leader of the *eseuri* age-set (the age-set whose members were the godfathers of the initiates in the ceremony). My informants also told me that even the decision to hold the ceremony was debated at length as one group was for and the other against the holding of the ceremony. The impression was that there was a lot of tension emanating from these differences.

My informants also confirmed that normally during such an occasion, the age-set participants were culturally obliged to raise 49 heads of cattle, for the *oleiboni*, their spiritual leader, ‘for him to bless the initiates and curse their enemies as they graduated to be elderly people in their society’ (RM 06). So, as was then culturally expected, the old men were called upon to decide how and whose cattle were taken to *oleiboni*.

“But, there was this Christian man, Mr Isaiah, from *Iseuri* age-set who is said to be spoken to by God. He is also an overseer of the community’s welfare. He is a well known peacemaker and was reputed as being able to pray for rain...and generally it has really rained...he is known to be God’s favoured man” (Discussion with the initiates at the venue).

Mr Isaiah (not real name) told the old men from *Iseuri* age-set not to allow their cattle to be taken to *oleiboni* because, in his opinion, it is only a way of enriching one family at the expense of others. He went ahead and told them instead to bring the cows, sell them, and use the money for building of schools and educate children from poor families. One of my ‘saved’ Christian informants who decided to have very little to do with the ceremony was philosophical:

“Even though I regard myself as a Maasai, I could not braid my hair or fully attend the ritual as some expected. I had chosen a different path and I am willing to make the necessary sacrifice. It is a price I am willing to pay” (RM 78).

On the other hand, the other disputants who were for continuity also argued their case. Their leader (*laigwenani*), Mr. Ole Kobo (no real name), was reported to have been much angered by the efforts of ‘the man of God’ to change the nature of the rite. He told the people:

“We cannot break our customary law just because of minor excuses of salvation. For how long have we been in this world...whoever broke his/her customary law is a slave. “Do you want us to be slaves?” he asked.” (informal group-discussion in the venue).

Finally, the group for change ‘won’. This was the first known occasion in Maasai history for an *Orn’gesherr* ceremony to be carried out without the spiritual blessings of an *Oleiboni*. As one newspaper reported:

“For the first time in the history of the Maasai, this year’s *Orng’esherr* celebrations were held last week without the participation of the *Oleiboni*, the senior most Maasai elder. In what was a colourful function at Kisaju village in Ngong Division, two age-groups *Ilkipal* and *Ilmajeshi* were united as one and graduated into elders without the blessings of *Oleiboni*. In the past, the ceremony was never considered as complete without the blessings from the *Oleiboni* who was supposed to receive 49 bulls from the *manyatta* where the new initiates came from and who would then bless the group in a ritual that involved the use of traditional medicines and herbs” (The People Daily Newspaper 01-12-03).

Here we see two forms of masculine contestations, one that laid claim to continuity and the other to change. As Michael Kimmel (2001) reminds us, masculinity can also be seen as a rhetoric of resistance and thus contestation. Thus this particular entry into elderhood masculinity for the first time became associated with Christian and thus ‘developmental’ ideals. This unprecedented happening particularly disturbed some elders in the village:

“All our traditions are now getting destroyed. In our time, the ceremony went on well without such quarrels...we were together in our minds” (RM 39, a senior elder).

Commenting on the way things were changing, another elder said:

“Everything changes so quickly these days that I often have trouble deciding which are the right rules to follow...people were better off in the old days when everyone knew just how he was expected to act” (RM 06).



From the perspective of Connell's theory of hegemonic masculinities, this can also be viewed as a contestation for hegemony and a sign of a decline of ideological decisions made on the basis of the Maasai need to pursue an identity within the 'traditional' cultural setting.

This contestation confirms the claim that, "the articulation between continuity and change...has come to colour the emerging identity of the Maasai" (Kituyi 1993: 131). These disputations represent bold confrontations between generalized Christian and Maasai cultures and work to valorise new masculinities in relation to both Christian and Maasai ideals. Such masculine disputations have also been studied for example between Christianity and Judaism, (e.g. Kruger 2004), who gives a detailed narrative of the disputations.

## 8.6 Conclusion

This chapter has examined the shifting production of Maasai masculinities and demonstrates that the changes in the expressions of gender and masculinity are embedded within the wider development context. We have found that some masculinities are taken as symbolizing admired traits, some, especially those which seem not to fit in the development agenda, are socially marginalized while others are actively dishonoured. The emerging concerns about the boy-child has been noted and seen to have a potential to aggravate the crisis of masculinity especially when the boys come of age and will be expected to provide for their own families. This is owing to the fact that increasingly more of them are facing exclusion in the sphere of education, a situation that is bound to compromise their chances of securing better jobs in future and fulfilling their socially prescribed role of providing for their families.

The marginalization and collapse of *moranhood* as an exalted masculinity and emergence of new masculinities based on educational and other attainments have also been noted. New 'modernistic' ideals of masculine identities as propagated by the state, Maasai elites, the

church and the education system have been seen to be responsible for this apparent marginalization. A crisis has also been generated in recent times by the existence of two modes of undergoing the culturally important rite of passage of *emuratare*, which transforms a boy into a man. This particular crisis highlights the existence of continuity-change dialectic in the masculine identities of the Maasai under the study.

The institution of marriage is yet another site of tension and conflict as the former cultural masculine ideal of polygamy comes under persistent assault from the church, the state and the poverty situation in the community. The Christian church for example has challenged the Maasai cultural construction of masculinity by introducing new ways of life, and new understandings of marriage and morality. The state has also proscribed early marriages for girls and the related FGM. This has precipitated some conflict as some men still cling to the masculine ideal of polygamy and insist on marrying off such girls. We also note that the curbing of early marriages has had a positive impact on some girls' life chances as they have gained more control over their lives especially through gaining higher levels of formal education. On the other hand, this can be viewed as creating some crisis of masculinity for some men who, as a result of these efforts, feel unable to actualize their aspired masculine ideal of having large families. The case study of the 2003 *orng'esherr* ceremony in Kisaju Village also serves to highlight this tension between continuity and change. What is also obvious is that many Maasai have embraced education and Christianity as alternative routes to the acquisition of masculine power and identity. We can thus conclude that Maasai masculinity is being forged to "uneasily embrace both the 'traditional' and the 'modern'", to borrow words from Hodgson (2003: 212).

## **Chapter Nine: 'Identities at a Crossroads': Other 'contemporary' markers of Maasai masculinities**

### **9.1 Introduction**

As we have thus far observed in this thesis, both masculine and feminine identities among the Maasai in the study area have been in a state of flux as they adjust to changes around them. In this chapter, I further show that the influx of diverse images of masculinity has made available ever more complex and multiple masculine identities as the Maasai get increasingly drawn into the global capitalist social, economic and cultural spheres. Masculinity has been said to be both a set of practices and behaviours and an ideological position within gender relations (Lewis 1998, cited in Berg 1999). The chapter commences with a focus on some contemporary ideals of masculinity and other attributes that reflect the contemporary ideas and practices of masculinity. I achieve this by looking into what the respondents' views of being a man are by probing their experiences and views of these identities.

This is also in line with the view by Asinyanbora (2001) that masculinity may be seen as both lived and imagined desires. I shall thus strive to bring out the understanding among my respondents of what these desires and images and the lived experiences of masculinities are and how they have been impacted upon by 'development'. I will start by discussing how male identities are gendered in terms of wealth, generosity and *enkanyit* by describing the diversity of attitudes and approaches to gender conceptualization around these aspects. More specifically I show that conceptualizations of wealth now encompass not only livestock and people, but has diversified to include other modern 'western' items such as motor vehicles, mobile phones, and modern houses. The gendered nature of the anxiety created by the desire to possess such modern masculine markers of identity and the inability of many to access them will also be explored. On the other hand, I will show that the values of generosity and *enkanyit* have been greatly compromised by the commoditization and privatization of Maasai social and economic relations.

I then focus on what I refer to as ‘dangerous’ masculinities by discussing issues pertaining to reproductive health and sexuality (with particular reference to HIV/AIDS pandemic), alcoholism and drug abuse, and domestic violence. Here, I show that, much as these issues may have been in the Maasai society for long, especially the use of alcohol and domestic violence (see e.g. Merker 1910 and Thomson 1885), modernization has greatly altered their frequency and severity. We shall explore how changes in lifestyles and livelihoods have led to greater vulnerability among the Maasai to HIV infections while commoditization of alcohol and the introduction of ‘European bottled-beer’ have drastically and adversely altered drinking habits. Alcohol and drug abuse, HIV/AIDS vulnerabilities and morbidity; and incidences of domestic violence will also be shown to be mutually constitutive and reinforcing within the framework of increased commoditization and privatization of Maasai economic and social relations, their subjugation by external economic interests, and subsequent changing lifestyles and livelihood strategies.

## **9.2 Some common contemporary ideals of masculinity**

### **9.2.1 *Wealth, generosity and enkanyit (respect)***

“An elder (Maasai) who is said to embody the ‘essence of elderhood’ is likely to be noted for his wealth, generosity, and wisdom” (Llewelyn-Davis 1981: 351).

#### **9.2.1.1 Wealth**

As we saw in chapters five, six and seven, many Maasai men have been dispossessed by circumstances beyond their control and are now living in acute states of deprivation. The questions as to what my informants thought a rich man and ideal man was in their community were posed to them. Among others, wealth featured as an important attribute of an ideal man while a poor man’s masculine power position was viewed as rather marginal. There was widespread agreement that a rich man (*ol karsis*) is one with a large family, money, a large herd, land, motor vehicle, and possibly an urban plot with rental structures. These were

viewed by many informants as the main status symbols and expressions of wealth and central sources of masculine identity and power. In addition, such a man was also seen as generally able to take good care of his family, which implies that masculinity is seen as a moral obligation to provide for the family. Thus the patriarchal ideal of man being the provider for his family remains popular. The following typical comments exemplify these points:

“A rich man is one with money, land and livestock, family and many children. He has built plots of land and owns a vehicle” (RM 8, senior *moran*).

“A rich man is one with large herds of livestock and a large family, for example one with five wives and a car” (RM 18, a 20 year old cattle trader and with no education).

Yet another of my informants had this to say of a rich person:

“A rich person is one who has a larger herd of livestock, many wives, many children, big portions of land. He also meets his family’s needs. He is one who can provide education for his siblings. One who has invested in many fields e.g. plots and so on i.e. a variety of investments” (CRM 21, a teacher).

A lazy man was on the other hand, frowned at...‘he likes money but doesn’t like working’ (RM 12, a senior *moran* and *emborokuai*).

Thus being rich is seen as what Akyeampong (1996: 160) calls ‘wealth in things’ and ‘wealth in people’, in his study in Ghana. The idea of people, mainly women and children, as property among the Maasai has been noted by Llewellyn-Davis (1981) and Dirk (1984: 230), who points out:

“The main status symbol and expression of wealth was the number of wives a man could afford”.

Sassi (1979: 30) had also observed the Maasai’s great love for their children:

“A man is rich if he has many animals, but children bring greater wealth...if a man has many animals but few children, he is poorer than a man who has few animals and many children”.

Waller (1999) also indicates that the Maasai definition of a rich person as one who has many children indicates that real wealth resides in (control over) people, including labour and reproductive labour; “an elder must have sons to herd and daughters to marry off” (*ibid*: 25).

The large family ideal was however not universal. Young educated men especially saw success in life differently, as the young high school educated man below shows in his response to what he thought a contemporary successful man was:

“One who can fully provide for his family...one with vehicles and good houses, not ‘*emanyatta*’ that leaks during the rains. Also one with a big portion of land and *few children*” (RM 14, a junior moran - employed in a mobile phone bureau)

Generally, the younger and more educated the man, the more inclined toward looking at success in terms of ‘modern’ things and values such as a modern house, vehicle, small family and so on.

#### 9.2.1.2: Generosity

Wealth did not however always confer status to a man and other values were important, including personal qualities such as generosity and *enkanyit*, again pointing to the existence of a multiplicity of masculinities. Gender, and by implication masculinity, is not only to do with persons but also, very importantly with values (White 1997). A wealthy but very mean person for instance was viewed in a negative light:

“A man is bad if he has property but is “*kepiak*” (not generous)...he cannot give anyone anything” (RM 34, junior elder).

“Bad man ‘*meishoyo toki*’ (gives nothing). He does not have friends...is anti-social. (RM 6, a senior elder-very old man).

“A rich person is one with many cattle (livestock) but some such rich people do not help anyone...even his children do not have shoes and live in a traditional house” (RM 17, a 66 year old senior elder).

Another said of an ideal man:

“An ideal man is *kear osim* (a social person)...a helper to his neighbour...a helper of the poor” (RM 09).

Some even related the discourses of development with those of generosity as the following response shows:

“An ideal man is one who knows how to relate well with people...he helps others in times of need. He uses whatever small he has and ‘brings develop forward” (RM 10, a junior *moran*).

Generally, men who were seen to be antisocial and selfish were viewed in a bad light and their identity was stigmatized. The identity of a thief was for instance stigmatized. “An *olapuroni* (thief), is a very bad man, he is like a tick” (RM 45, a senior elder). This is in line with what other scholars such as Paechter (2003: 7) have observed:

“To be accepted as ‘fully masculine’ within a particular social grouping, one must display particular characteristics and behaviours. If one does not, one risks rejection from the group on the grounds of Otherness, of not conforming sufficiently closely to the local conceptions of what it is to be a man”.

But many were also of the view that development was compromising the ideal of generosity by enhancing individualism as the typical response below indicates:

“*Maendeleo* (development) has brought many changes in our society. There are now poor social relations since everyone depends on himself. Even men of the same age-set do not care about each other...everybody is busy with his own life...very little cooperation” (RM 12, a senior *moran*).

A crisis of masculinity is implicit here in the sense that in the modern capitalist oriented social and economic relations where the Maasai are increasingly becoming individualistic, generosity as a value is difficult to achieve. This also reinforces our earlier observation that the gap between the rich and the poor has widened considerably with modernization, and in particular the individualization of Maasai social and economic relations.

#### 9.2.2.3: *Enkanyit* (respect)

“*Enkanyit* is one element of Maasai lifestyle that is of importance to any study of the Maasai” (Coast 2000: 69).

As mentioned in Chapter Four, in the Maasai community, *enkanyit* as a value was central to Maasai social relations and was based mainly, but not exclusively, on seniority such that younger persons were expected to show respect to the older ones. Indeed, respect for elders was one of the first things that a child learnt (Coast 2000). Among the Maasai, elders were

revered, not only as figures of authority, but also as repositories of the community's knowledge and values. In contemporary times however, many forces of social change have impacted variously on the social relations between the younger and the older generations. With widespread acceptability of Western values and lifestyles, collective institutions and systems that reflect an entirely new paradigm in decision-making and in which the traditional knowledge and values are largely ignored have gradually replaced the role of elders. Consequently, the older generation has almost lost contact with its younger contemporaries who are increasingly less inclined to submit to them in everyday decision-making processes.

My informers point to a situation where social relations are breaking down, as many youth seem to have made a break with traditional ideas of generational respect, thus constructing new relationships that are less respectful of elders. Conflict, opposition and misunderstandings between the youth and the elderly mark the social relations and intergenerational relatedness. Many elders levelled criticism on the youth who they described as being disrespectful, and emphasised the need for respect and generosity. When discussing this issue, some commented:

"In my days, there was a lot of respect between and within age-groups but today, this is not very common, young people go to school and do not follow traditions – they don't respect elders" (RM 17).

"Generally, today's young men are culturally lost. Respect for the elders is no longer there as was in the past" (RM 12, an elderly man).

"Young men in rural areas are more disciplined than in urban where they don't care about age" (RM 39).

In a way, these elders are conceding that they can no longer control their 'children'. Others lamented:

"Today, our community is changing very fast, a change where the young are moving ahead of their elders, they are in a hurry to find their place in the modern world" (CRM 54).

"But although culture today has been eroded, there are some aspects that were good such as *enkanyir*" (RM 36, junior elder)



These sentiments were also echoed by one junior elder and a schoolteacher:

“The culture of towns has reduced our community’s norms and introduced indiscipline and bad behaviours. In towns the communal way of life has been also eroded because people there are self-centred” (RM 21).

These relations between the young and older generations were complicated even more by the younger men’s social and material living conditions. This is straining the relationship between parents and young married men. Many younger men for instance were of the view that their fathers were making unreasonable demands on them. The major complaint was that their fathers were being dictatorial and did not understand that they were facing lots of problems in trying to make ends meet. For the sons who are married especially, they resented the attempts by their fathers to control their earnings even as they were heads of their own nuclear families. For them, the ‘unreasonable demands’ on them was a cause of anxiety as their inability to ‘provide’ for their dependants (the elders included) was being exposed. According to Maasai culture, so long as a son is living in his father’s compound (which many were doing), he is under his ‘command’. Thus there appears to be a conflict between the older model of relationships where elders were heads of large extended families and the ‘new’ nuclear family model as espoused by the younger generation. The case below may not be quite typical but it points to an escalation of these strained relations;

“There was this case where a father brought his son a wife and the son refused her because he (son) wondered how he could take care of her. There was a big quarrel and finally the father had to take the girl back to the in-laws. In the olden days, such a thing was unheard of and everybody in the neighbourhood was very concerned” (RM 84, a teacher).

Many elders complained of the youth being disrespectful and felt that they were losing control over them whereas the younger generation felt they were being overburdened by the elders’ demands.

### *9.2.2 Consumption and other new and changing lifestyles*

“In most African countries...cars, clothes ...are important signifiers of status” (Harding 2003: 70).

This section focuses more closely on the consumption of modern, western goods and the impact of such consumption on identity. In section 9.2.1.1, we have seen how wealth is increasingly being viewed in terms of possession of modern items such as motor vehicles, modern houses and so on. One of the aims of capitalism is to create and expand markets for goods and services to enhance ‘profitability’ and exploitation (Said 1993, wa Thiong’o 1986). The contemporary identity construction among the Maasai involves them as consumers in the local, national and global markets. My findings show that the consumption of modern items such as motor vehicles, clothing and mobile phones appeared to impact on Maasai identities. There was a wide spectrum of practices and attitudes pertaining to the above with a few examples below.

#### 9.2.2.1 Pool games, *bao* and mobile phones

Playing pool games for the younger men appear to be largely a male privilege and a form of experiencing masculinity. Most social places, both in rural centres and nearby towns, now have pool tables and a multitude of young men participate in the games. This is a relatively new game among many Maasai, and indeed many Kenyans, and playing these games is increasingly being associated with being manly/manliness, as conferring some status and a sense of inclusion.

In addition, having a mobile phone appears to be a symbol of change and identity for many men: “I am now with the rest of the world”, as one *moran* small-scale trader happily said. Connecting with ‘the rest of the world’ seems highly regarded and is an aspiration of many men. Again, and as in the case of pool games, this trend is not restricted to Maasai men and has been embraced by many Kenyan men since the late 1990s. We may also mention here that many of these men, especially businessmen, were using the mobile phone instrumentally to connect with their customers or suppliers, much as they may also be symbols of identity. All

in all, playing pool games and owning a mobile phone are relatively new and quite popular forms of experiencing masculinity. They are being used, as Andrea Cornwall (2003: 237) would put it, “to carve out new ways of being a man, associated with worldly sophistication”.

Many elderly men on the other hand played *bao* or *enkeshui* (what Llewellyn-Davis 1981: 244, calls ‘African chess’). Traditionally, playing *bao* was a male privilege:

“After the ritual called ‘the village of stools’, a man may claim the privilege of playing *enkeshui* in the villages (Llewellyn-Davis 1981: 244).

Although this is not a new practice, as in the case of pool games, we may also register that it is also another way in which Maasai men experience or act out their masculine identity.

This male privilege still remains and I observed elders spending many hours playing this game in one corner in some social places as the younger men played the game of pool in another corner. The playing of pool by the relatively younger men and *bao* by elders points to further multiplicity of masculine enactments. We also note the commoditization of pastimes in the form of pool games that are again of western origin and which serve as a vehicle for western commodities and cultural import.

We may also mention that, only a relatively small number of men could afford to play the pool games let alone ‘connect’ with the rest of the world. The majority were relegated to mere spectators even as they would have wanted to partake of these new experiences. The point here is that given the above prevailing masculine ideals, many are experiencing ‘crises of identity’ as they try to actualize such ideals in vain .

#### 9.2.2.2 Dressing

The link between identity and wearing certain styles of clothes has been noted for instance in the Dominican Republic (Henriquez 2001), Trinidad (Crichlow 2004), and the wider Caribbean (Cozier 2004). For example, Henriquez (2001: 3) observed that:

“A man must not wear certain styles of clothes nor do his hair in certain ways, as this would leave him open to suspicion of not being a ‘proper man’”.

Crichlow (2004: 202-203) also notes that he could not wear pink in the 1960s, 1970s and early 1980s as these hues were viewed as, “weak, feminine, ‘uncool’ – usually worn by women”.

In the discourse of development, the wearing of ‘traditional’ dress among the Maasai has been viewed variously and ambivalently as both a mark of ‘backwardness’ (Talle 1999) and also celebrated as a worthwhile, admirable and authentic marker of *moranship* identity especially in the tourist industry. In my research sites, modes of dress ranged from the traditional *shukas* (toga) mainly, but not exclusively, worn by elderly men and women to trousers, shirts and shoes (conventional western clothing) worn mainly, and again not exclusively, by younger men. Such wearing of western clothing highlight a cultural change and the emergence of identity linked to western norms and cultural and economic domination. Commenting on the difference between the rural and urban Maasai many respondents associated these changes to urbanization and by extension modernization as is seen below:

“Dressing has also changed because now many are wearing like town people” (RM 05, a senior *morani* and small scale meat trader)

“The rural Maasai mainly wear *shuka* (toga). They are not widely travel ...they do not know the bad things of town...where some women go almost naked” (RM 18).

“Some Maasai in rural areas do not want to put on modern clothes so as not to defile their culture” (RM 26, a junior elder).

Another related issue that came up during my fieldwork and which merits some attention here is that of women wearing trousers. As Paechter (2003) informs us, to be a full participant in a community, core sub-groups adopt particular, in many cases quite restrictive forms of dress and behaviour, which can reflect very localized forms of masculinity and femininity. In Kenya, a great deal of debate over whether women should wear trousers has been going on

for quite some time. The opposition by some men to the wearing of trousers by women has even led to ugly and unfortunate incidences where some women have been stripped naked.

“The general feeling among the critics of trouser-clad women is that trousers are strictly a male item of clothing and by wearing them, women are intruding into male fashion” (The Daily Nation Newspaper, 03-10-2004).

I did not come across any woman in trousers in my rural research area and I learnt from my informants that this is a practice that is still frowned on especially by the older generation. However some Maasai women wore them in urban areas but changed to dresses or *shuka* (togas) when they went to the rural areas. One girl in the nearby Isinya town almost always wore trousers and was described as ‘*kali*’ (fierce) by men in a discussion group:

“*Yeye hajali vile watu wanasema* (she does not care what people say). She is even the one who collects rent for the residential houses belonging to her father. She behaves like a man”.

I learnt that her having gone to school and coming from a well-to-do and educated family allows her to break away from the perceived norms. To an extent, this is in line with the observation by Miescher and Lindsay (2003: 7) that:

“Gender is not merely ‘constructed’ but produced by the ideas and actions of women and men in interaction with local and translocal structures and processes”.

Many educated Maasai parents tend to tolerate such lifestyles, especially if they are living in an urban area away from the censure of the elders.

The irony of these ‘trouser politics’ is that the trouser is a colonial legacy introduced by the British but which has now been to a large measure appropriated by men who now use it as a marker of their identity to the exclusion of women. Contributing to this ranging debate on trouser wearing in Kenya, one Njoki Kaigai quite eloquently and convincingly captures this irony:

“Men only began wearing trousers when the white man came to town. It is rather strange that this new breed of trouser converts is today zealously guarding what they consider to be their God-given territory” (The Daily Nation Newspaper, 19-03-05).

Again we here see a legacy of colonialism contributing to a crisis in masculinity understood in the sense of men causing problems to women on account of trousers. This of course is not to deny the agency of such men, but to appreciate that before colonialism and the eventual introduction of trousers, this problem was not known. In the neighbouring state of Tanzania on the other hand, it is the government that has been, “enforcing the wearing of trousers and shirts by Maasai men in towns” (Hodgson 2003: 218) in an effort to make them adopt ‘civilized dress’ (Markakis 2004: 23).

### 9.2.2.3 Hairstyles

In order to be beautiful and attractive, the Maasai woman would have a well-shaved head while the *moran* displayed the aesthetic elegance of their masculinity by letting their hair grow and then plaiting it into long pigtails (*oltaika*) which are covered with a cosmetic paste made of fat and red clay as a sign of beauty (Sassi 1979). The power of this masculine image of the *moran* was acknowledged by the colonial administration to the extent that their heads were forcibly shaven by the administration in an effort to reduce their ‘visibility’ and hence potential power within the community in Kajiado District (Coast 2000). Writing on this aspect of *moran* masculinity more than twenty years ago, Melissa Llewellyn-Davies indicated that *morans* were expected to cultivate charm and their physical beauty:

“They should plait their hair in the latest fashion, wear sweet-smelling herbs around their necks and in their armpits, and adorn themselves with ochre and with jewelry made of beads and leather...they are displaying to their fellow Maasai and the outside world, the elegance of masculinity and the aesthetic elegance of Maasai culture in general” (1981: 349).

Today, the red-coloured Maasai *moran* is still one of the most powerful and famous tourist images of Kenya. Indeed, numerous young Maasai and non-Maasai Kenyan men are increasingly embracing this *moran* image to charm and win the hearts of tourists visiting Kenya:

“The change to *moranism* involves braiding the hair and dying it red with ochre. The candidate adorns himself in a red *shuka*, multi-coloured chokers, earrings and bracelets,

with a club to match. For the rare perfectionist, knocking out two front teeth in the lower jaw is a must. Standing erect with a spear or *rungu* in hand, in a traditional posture, completes the picture. This has now become a lucrative business, and scores of *morans*, both genuine and fake alike- are flooding the coastal beaches to make a living from this trade” (The Sunday Nation Newspaper, 12-12-2004).

However, past attitudes and values appear to be slowly phasing out under the weight of new attitudes and values. Other than in the tourist industry, practices and attitudes toward hair and hairstyles have undergone dramatic changes in the recent past. For men, the majority, and not unlike many other Kenyan men, had short hair and only a few wore *oltaika* and had smeared themselves with red ochre. Indeed, as a kind of a reversal of practices, a big number of Maasai women now wear long hair and many even plaited it. Some Maasai men were however uncomfortable with this state of affairs as they took this to be an intrusion on their (men’s) cultural space and practice of identity. There is a double standard here in that they do not seem to see anything wrong in fellow men (who were the majority) who have cut their hair short as being an intrusion of women’s space for gender performance.

In connection to this, in the Kenyan Lake Victoria port city of Kisumu, an interesting phenomenon has recently arisen where Maasai *morans* have started the business of braiding women’s hair; ‘the job is done by the roadside or under a tree’ (The Standard Newspaper 12-05-2005). Across the border in Tanzania, *morans* have gone further and opened up hair salons in which they plait women’s hair into pigtaails:

“A big number of young Maasai warriors have now joined the city’s more lucrative beauty industry after abandoning a stint as night watchmen. The Maasai have stumbled on a booming business of weaving Rasta hairstyles, a trendy hairstyle that seems to have taken the city’s hair-fashion scene by storm” (RahaNews.com, 05.05.03).

The above is an issue of Maasai *morans* cultural masculine marker of identity being appropriated and repackaged and sold as a ‘modern’ product and this time to women (as now a feminine product). This further reveals the fluidity of Maasai masculine/cultural markers of identity.

### 9.3 Harmful masculinities?

This section focuses on masculinity as a risk factor and the following comments by one of my informants serves as an appropriate preamble:

“Development has brought good things like education, good schools and houses. But it has also brought bad things for example young men are lost in town and engage with prostitutes and drugs. There is also careless drinking especially when men sell land. Crime has increased and deadly diseases are spreading” (RM 10, a junior *moran*).

The connection between masculinity and the prevalence of drug abuse (especially alcohol), HIV/AIDS and domestic violence has become a focus of interest for many studies (see for example Bujra 2002, Roberson and Suzuki 2003, Sabo and Gordon 1995, Silberschmidt 1999, 2001, 2004 and Thomson 2002). Indeed, socially constructed images of masculinity can encourage high-risk behaviour such as violence, sexual risk-taking, excessive drinking or drug use (World AIDS Campaign 2001). Below, I focus on alcoholism and drug abuse, reproductive health and sexuality and domestic violence.

#### 9.3.1 Alcoholism and Drugs

“Studies of alcohol use have recently turned to the investigation of masculinity” (Campbell *et al* 1999: 166).

In this section, I show that drug abuse, especially alcohol abuse, has become an entrenched version of masculinity among many Maasai men. As de Keizer (2005) suggests, the crisis of masculinity is not just manifest when men harm women and other men, but also when they harm themselves. The National Agency for the Campaign Against Drug Abuse (NACADA) - a semi-autonomous organization in Kenya (Willis 2003) - indicates that substances that cause the biggest damage in the country are the legal ones such as alcohol, tobacco and *miraa* (khat) and that besides *bhang* (cannabis), alcohol and tobacco are the most abused substances in the country (The Standard Newspaper Newspaper, 29-11-2004). According to the 2004 ‘National Baseline Survey on Substance Abuse among the Youth in Kenya’, alcohol abuse has been on the increase and addiction to it goes hand in hand with tobacco abuse (The Daily Nation



Newspaper 18-03-2005). It is important to carefully analyse alcohol abuse since men's alcohol abuse is often taken to represent, "the opposite of women's familial altruism, yet both risk an essentialism which forecloses a more useful analysis of what contradictions and crisis lie behind them" (Jackson 1999: 103).

My findings show that many Maasai men are adapting risky identities through the abuse of drugs such as alcohol, cigarettes, *miraa* (*khat*) and to a lesser extent cannabis. The lamentations of one of the elderly informants below about how drinking had negatively impacted on his life makes the problem of drinking more vivid:

"When I was young, I went to a colonial school and did the K.C.E (Kenya Certificate of Education). I did not pass well and joined the military service. I served for seven years and got no good promotion. Later, I left and started my own business, "*orkunjai*" livestock buying and selling. I prospered but was affected by drinking. It destroyed my business. Now I depend on '*vibarua*' (casual work) such as doing farm work, gathering cow dung and mending the fence to sustain myself" (RM 11, a junior elder).

*Khat* is sold informally and legally and is widely consumed, especially by those employed as night *askali* – watchmen - (discussed in Chapter Seven) as it is famed for keeping one alert by reducing sleep. Cannabis, on the other hand, is an illegal drug. Our main focus in this section is on the (mis)use of alcohol and to a lesser extent tobacco.

The consumption of alcohol in Africa has attracted some scholarly attention in the recent past e.g., in Kenya (Willis 2003), Ghana (Akyeampong 1996), Cameroon (Diduk 1993) and Tanzania (Rekdal 1996 and Willis 2001). In Kenya, as in much of Africa, the postcolonial 'ideal' drink has been 'bottled European beer' (Diduk 1993), a reliable contributor to the Exchequer and a consumption item displaying "respectability, commitment to national building and good citizenship" (Willis 2003: 245). On the other hand, official hostility to the producers of informal-sector beverages has been considerable. Indigenous brews were, and still are, identified in public rhetoric as: "A cause of laziness; symptoms and perhaps causes of the failure of rural Kenyans, in particular, to live up to the expectations of the modernizing state" (*ibid*: 243-4). Indeed, small scale distilling in Kenya has been banned and thus

criminalized since the beginning of the colonial period, and has remained illegal ever since. The production of indigenous fermented brews was increasingly circumscribed by law, and in 1979 was effectively banned in the course of a campaign of public rhetoric involving the new president Daniel arap Moi, within which the expression of hostility to 'traditional liquor' became synonymous with an avowal of enthusiasm for development (Haugerud 1995, in Willis 2003: 244). This did not however, bring to an end the making and drinking of the informal-sector (read 'indigenous') brews (*ibid*).

What is clear here is that from the colonial times, there have been concerted efforts at 'Othering' the indigenous African alcoholic drinks by labelling them barriers to development and progress, in contrast to the so-called 'bottled European beer' mentioned above. I argue that this is yet another way in which the rhetoric of 'development' has been, and continued to be used as a tool of exploitation. It is the familiar story of depicting what is authentically African as 'primitive' and in need of 'civilizing'; and which, as we have again noted, has been an excuse for the exploitation of Africa. We may thus note that manufacturing and selling enterprises of this bottled-beer in Kenya has been in western hands for long. Today for instance, The East African Breweries (a private company which almost enjoy monopoly status) is owned by the British Guinness plc, which holds 63.5 per cent of the total equity, leaving Kenyans to scramble for the rest (The Standard Newspaper, 2005).

For the Maasai, mead fermented sugar or honey such as *esuguroi* and *muratina* was their home-produced 'traditional' drink. However, and like other traditional African alcoholic drinks (as we have noted above), the making and drinking of such drinks has been proscribed by the state in favour of 'modern' brews introduced during the colonial period. Thus the communal drinking by Maasai men, an old tradition, has been effectively commoditized through the nearly exclusive provision of bottled beer in the formal alcohol selling outlets.

In Chapter Seven, we saw that with the precedence of an apparent male elder monopoly on the holding of family wealth, land titles had almost always exclusively been allocated to male household heads. We also saw that many men, after the privatization of land, have sold the family land and squandered the proceeds in alcohol drinking sprees. John Galaty (1992: 35) opines that:

“Drunkenness” versus “sobriety” has become an important contrast in Maasai culture of today, and the express concern regarding the trend toward the commoditization and sale of land”.

Galaty (1992) however also notes that overindulgence has never been foreign to Maasai elders and a certain prestige went with generosity, wealth, leisure and girth, but occasions on which it was possible were previously limited. Today, with bottled beer always available and male authority jurally encoded, a man’s unrestrained expenditure of scarce domestic income on his own flagrant consumption of alcohol has become a major problem in Maasai families (*ibid*). That bottled European-style beer serves as a symbol of affluence and status in much of sub-Saharan Africa is clear (Diduk 1993).

As we have however seen thus far in this thesis, the process of modernization has rendered the majority of the Maasai men poorer and marginalized. As such, for many of them, this ‘modern’ alcohol is too expensive and they have thus resorted to taking ‘illegal’ alcohol such as *changaa* (made from sugar, water, molasses and fermented yeast) and *kumi kumi* among others. Both are relatively easy to make and cheap and are readily commercially available in slum areas of urban centres and are said to be harmful to health for various reasons such as the unhygienic conditions in which they are prepared. In addition, there have been reports that lethal ingredients are added during their preparation to make them ‘tougher’ and thus popular and more profitable to the brewers. As some respondents put it:

“Many Maasai men and some women have been affected by cheap brews...because local ones like *rorongana* have been prohibited (RF 51).

“Cheap brews have broken homes...taken away our husbands” (RF 53).

There is also a link between male sociability (and therefore identity) and intoxication as the respondents below suggest:

“There is careless taking of cheap brews because of availability of cheap ones like *kumi kumi*. Such cheap ones allow people to get drunk with even very little money. Alcohol drinkers have a common social life...they are friendly to each other so if one doesn't have money, a friend gives him brew” (RM 57, a junior moran).

“Today, many women have the responsibilities to cater for their families' needs because their husbands are less concerned. They just wake-up and go to town, drink beer and come back home – even if they don't have money (RF 51, an elderly woman).

There is thus a close bond among alcohol takers as they do take care of each other in their drinking. John Galaty has also noted that:

“Implied by the pleasure of imbibing communally is an obligation to receive drinks, and obligation to give drinks; one does not ‘offer’ a drink as a Westerner might (which seems to invite refusal), one ‘gives’ a bottle or even two” (Galaty 1992: 35).

In her study, Kandiyoti (1994) also found out that men's pre-occupation with their masculinity compelled them to try and maintain their community status by holding on to symbolic gestures of manliness such as entertaining friends lavishly.

This abuse is to an extent also driven by the consumption of media images circulated in advertisements and sales promotions that associate the taking of drugs such as alcohol and cigarettes with glamour and sophistication, as one young man informant put it: ‘*beer na fagii ni poa*’ (beer and cigarettes are cool) (RM 08). Indeed, those men who regularly imbibed viewed their counterparts who did not take alcohol with suspicion. They were said to be either controlled by their wives (‘sat-on’), in the fear of wives, or just running after women. In her study among Kisii community in western Kenya, Silberschmidt (1999) also found that men who abstained from alcohol were looked upon with suspicion since others would comment; ‘he has been overpowered by his wife’, ‘he acts like a woman’. As a result it is a man's entitlement to go to a bar, part of being a man. Rightfully, NACADA argues that alcohol and cigarette manufacturers have tactfully conditioned the minds of young people to see fun and fantasy in drinking and smoking. Indeed, through advertising, a strong alcohol sub-culture has

taken root in the country: "Youths see prestige in the consumption of alcohol," says Mr Kaguthi, the head of NACADA (The Daily Nation Newspaper, 18-03-2005).

Dynamics in the corporate capitalist world are also implicated especially in the case of tobacco consumption. As tobacco markets shrink in the developed world due to increasing awareness and tighter controls, tobacco companies have made the 'Third World' its final bastion (The Daily Nation Newspaper, 23-11-2004). Local politicians unconvincingly argue that it is about protecting tobacco farmers and the economy. However the issue is not just about protecting the interests of poor tobacco farmers or securing an important part of the economy but about protecting the profits of those who manufacture. In any case, this is a drop in the ocean against the health bill the country has to pay to treat smoke-related diseases (*ibid*). We may also note here that the manufacture and sale of cigarettes in Kenya has been in the hands of British American Tobacco (BAT) Company (again a western multinational) since colonial times.

Some respondents also associated the taking of such drugs with 'boredom' and stress emanating from poverty:

"There is a lot of beer drinking...because of stress. They think it will remove stress" (RF 48, elderly woman).

"When people are busy, they will not do such things" (RM 25, junior elder).

Other reasons given by my informants include the breakdown of cultural order as the authority of the elders to control the younger men has been eroded because the sanctions are not so strict as in the past. In earlier times, drink was a prerogative of elders, and primarily males, for whom the primary opportunity for communal drinking was offered at ceremonies, the sponsorship of which shifted between households, homesteads and neighbourhoods (Galaty 1992, Merker 1910). 'Traditionally' elders would strictly determine when younger men would start drinking alcohol. As we saw in section 9.2.1.3, the authority of the elders has considerably vanished under the weight of modernization:

“Long ago it was not like today... *pombe* (alcohol) was only taken occasionally. But nowadays it is sold day and night...everyday” (RM 17, a senior elder).

“There was occasional drinking during *intaleng'o* (special occasions). But today people just get drunk anyhow” (RM 26, a junior elder).

“There was no drinking by *morans* unless they stole brew, which was not very common. They could only on special occasions take some brews and only a limited amount and while hiding. Today you can't differentiate between young and old men in relation to drinking – all drink anywhere and anyhow. In the past people would drink only occasionally. Schools have brought changes” (RM 7, senior elder).

“There was no drinking until one was permitted by the “*olprion*” (age-set counselor)” (RM 06, elder man).

Some also generally blamed this trend on *maendeleo* (development) and the related land sales:

“One impact of *maendeleo* is the availability of local brews at cheap prices...this leads our men to over drink causing death, accidents and diseases” (RF 37).

“Young men are lost in towns and they abuse drugs” (RM 09, a senior elder-driver)

Others still saw it as an impediment to development:

“Drinking also prevents development, that is, bad use of money so that instead of setting up investments they drink all the money” (RF 48, an elderly lady).

The identity of men who were seen as drinking irresponsibly was viewed as wanting and problematic as the following description of ‘a bad’ reveals:

“One who uses drugs and too much alcohol because he thinks no more” (RM 25, a junior elder).

Other reasons included home influence (exposure to drugs at home) such as in the commercial making of *changaa* (an alcoholic spirit) and other cheap drinks at home, employment in bars, and curiosity leading to experimenting with drugs.

Modernization is deeply implicated in the abuse of drugs and especially alcohol through commoditization and promotions that associate it with a glamorous and sophisticated identity. Indirectly modernization is implicated through land sales, marginalization and

breakdown of cultural values which have led to increased abuse. Consequently, there is now a closer link between male identity and alcohol (and to a lesser extent, smoking) abuse.

### 9.3.2 *Reproductive health and sexuality*

“Faithfulness in families is a daily topic because of AIDS” (RM 39, a senior elder).

The connection between the dynamics of masculinity and the incidence of sexually transmitted diseases, especially Human Immunodeficiency Virus and Acquired Immunity Deficiency Syndrome (hereafter HIV and AIDS respectively) has of late received some attention. Bujra (2002) suggests a need to consider the effects of the social construction of masculinities since, as she puts it, ‘AIDS is gendered...but not everywhere in the same way’ (pp. 209-210). In this section I show that social and economic shifts among the Maasai are creating conditions conducive to HIV infections.

From a postcolonial theoretical perspective, it is important to mention that while discussing sexuality in an African context (as in the case of the Maasai), we have to take cognizance of the biological reductionism in the racial discourse which, as we have noted in Chapter Five, often represents black men as hypersexual. Talle (1999) also mentions that depicting the poor, blacks, the working class and so on as having insatiable sexual urges is a common instrument of power, ‘Othering’ and also deprecating. As such, HIV/AIDS is popularly linked with promiscuous sexual behaviour and often treated as both a sign of, and a punishment for, such promiscuity (Stanovsky 1998). An additional racist connotation of AIDS can be found in the often-repeated view that AIDS originated in Africa, possibly even as a consequence of this imagined promiscuity. In the West, such a link perpetuates the images of Africa used to justify and legitimate colonial (as we saw in Chapter Five in the case of the Maasai) and neo-colonial rule. Africans were and still are depicted as culturally backward, in need of Western guidance and enlightenment in managing even basic tasks such as family life (*ibid*). Contrary to these stereotypes, surveys of sexual behaviour show that the phenomenon of men having

more sexual partners than women is in most societies in the world (see e.g. Bujral 2002, Thomson 2002, Panos 1998).

The point here is that in analysing the sexuality of Maasai and other African people we must be aware of, and indeed challenge, these western stereotypes of the African man that have been used to justify colonialism and neo-colonialism. Indeed, Coast (2000) in her research among the Maasai found that from early on and through the whole colonial period, the colonial administrators portrayed the Maasai men as promiscuous. Maasai men were said to contribute to infertility among Maasai women because of their increased use of prostitutes. Coast however shows that data collected to support this was unreliable, bringing to question the very purpose of this portrayal. Talle (1999) also describes how the Maasai 'Otherness' focuses on how the Maasai are perceived as odiferous, dirty, backward, and ignorant by especially non-Maasai in post-colonial East Africa. Given these widely held views, it is unsurprising that images of the Maasai as disease-ridden and infertile have persisted for so long (Coast 2000). As such the impact of 'development' on their sexuality has been somehow blurred and needs to be investigated. Indeed, Tallis (2002) points out that the HIV/AIDS epidemic acts as a spotlight, exposing inequalities, including gender inequalities, globally, and is thus at its worst in regions where poverty and economic inequality is extensive and access to public health facilities is low and uneven. Indeed, the vast majority of the total numbers of people living with HIV are in the 'developing' world, with 71 percent of the men women and children infected living in sub-Saharan Africa (UNAIDS 2002, cited in Tallis 2002: 5).

Gleaning the statistics on HIV/AIDS in the study area and its environs (supplied by MAAP) brings home a grim picture as the figures below for the year 2003 indicate. In Isinya area (the home town for many Kisaju residents), the prevalence was 6.8 %. In Kajiado District where most of my respondents were drawn from 9 out of 100 people were infected with the virus, 70 percent who were aged between 15 and 25 years, about 3500 in total. There were more than



10,000 orphans in the District and AIDS patients occupied 4 out of 10 beds while the figure was 7 out of 10 patients at Manyatta Tuberculosis Centre. In Kitengela Township, 22 out of 100 were positive while the figure was about 28 out of 200 for Ongata Rongai and Kiserian towns. The Kajiado District Development Plan for the period 2002-2008 also indicates that between 1997 and 2001, the HIV prevalence rose to 13 percent due to 'slow behaviour change' (Kenya 2002: 14)

Silberschmidt (1999, 2001, 2004) reveals that with masculinity being closely related and often associated with 'sexual aggressiveness', men in Eastern Africa seem to compensate for loss of social value and self-esteem by increased sexual activity and casual sex. Her argument is somehow supported by Dr Ephantus Njagi, a leading Kenyan HIV/AIDS clinician, who opines that Kenyan men's growing frustration and confusion over their roles in families and the general community is leading many men to engage in risky sexual behaviour with casual partners, driving the HIV epidemic:

"In this situation, where economic stagnation has robbed many men of the ability to provide for themselves and their families, it is not surprising that some are engaging in risky sex as a compensating mechanism" (The Daily Nation Newspaper, 12-03-04).

For the Maasai, separation of men from their wives has increased substantially owing to changing social economic dynamics created by 'development'. As we saw in Chapter Seven, many men are increasingly finding it hard to contribute to their families' upkeep as they fall deeper into poverty. Indeed, many couples have to live apart, since men must sometimes migrate or be mobile in search of work, as is the case of *askari wa usiku*, *emborokuai*, cattle traders and others. Some husbands just abandon their families when there is a lot of *osina* (poverty) leading to a rise in prostitution in the nearby towns.

"It is not uncommon for young husband to take-off when problems get too many – run away due to inability to take care of family" (informal group discussion).

Responding to the question as to what he thought the main problems men were facing, one elder said:

“The major problem is poverty...no money. This has led to breakage of families – if no wealth, some women run away. Such has led some women to prostitution” (RM 34, a junior elder).

“Some men marry many wives and cannot provide for them...therefore some women even go for prostitution” (RF 38, a junior elder’s wife).

The use of commercial sex by Maasai women to earn a living during times of economic hardship has been noted since colonial times (White 1990, cited in Coast 2000). Talle (1999) also notes that impoverished Maasai women engage in the sale of sex, based on fieldwork undertaken at the cross-border town of Namanga. Tallis (2005) notes the relationship between HIV, gender and poverty is complex and points out that, pressing concerns for short-term survival may lead poor women to engage in survival sex which paradoxically can expose them to long-term risks of illness and death through HIV infection. My informants also mentioned that prostitution is being fuelled by the establishment of modern industries in Ngong Division, mainly construction (quarrying) and floriculture (flowers grown for European export market). The men who work in these industries are immigrant workers from various parts of the country and because Maasai women have been made vulnerable by poverty many of them indulge in sexual relations with such moneyed employees and thereby risk contracting HIV/AIDS. This situation is exacerbated by the fact that many Maasai husbands of such women move far from home in such of employment and business leaving their spouses destitute. Indeed, male promiscuity in Africa has commonly been contextualized in terms of male labour migration and the emergence of a market for commercial sex (cf Bujra 1982; cf White 1990).

There is also a phenomenon of Maasai men, who after making some lump sum from proceeds of land sales, livestock sales and trading, stay over for days in bars and lodgings in the nearby towns and urban centres having intimate encounters with prostitutes and concubines. The urban centres of Ongata Rongai, Ngong and Kiserian in Ngong Administrative Division are among some of these places where alarming HIV/AIDS figures

are given above. These towns were said to be where the above mentioned intimate encounters took place for the Maasai of Ngong, but not exclusively. In the Kajiado District Development Plan for 2002 – 2008, the Kenyan Government also acknowledges that prevalence is high in such urban areas of the district due to cattle trading, uncontrolled commercial sex industry, increase in unemployment, drug abuse, and the impact of long distance truck drivers who lodge in urban areas (Kenya 2002).

There are many stories told of dramatic escapades involving bar women and such Maasai men in these towns. A one common one is that of a woman who, after her client had fallen asleep, took a padlock and chained the man's pierced ear lobe to a metal bar of the bed and disappeared after fleecing the man of all his money. When he woke up in the morning and realized the woman had gone with his money (which is rumoured to have been quite substantial), he jumped out of the bed, tearing his chained ear lobe and running helter-skelter looking for the woman. The truth of the story, or otherwise, aside, many bar women I talked to confirmed that Maasai men's money is the main issue in these liaisons. Talle's research (1999) in Namanga also found that young men with some schooling are more likely to pay for sex with commercial sex workers. She also notes that this is also the case with Maasai who engaged in non-traditional forms of employment and have access to cash (see Coast 2000). We have thus far seen that education and non-traditional forms of jobs are, by and large, related to modernization among the Maasai.

This issue has also to be looked at in relation to the problem of alcohol abuse discussed in section 9.3.1. Alcohol is known to reduce inhibitions and create conducive environments for promiscuity. In addition, the beer commercials discussed in section 9.3 also had sexual connotations. Indeed, and although media influence could be hard to quantify, television, especially Western programmes, have helped to glamorise sexuality by setting standards and encouraging peer pressure (The Sunday Standard Newspaper, 10-10-2004).

Obviously, not all men who got such lump sums mentioned above got involved in such practices. However the issue was very well known and talked about widely and with concern in the study area. Indeed, the issue of HIV/AIDS transmission featured quite prominently in the debate on the commoditization and subsequent sale of land discussed in Chapter Seven. As one junior elder's wife said:

“After selling the family land, some husbands run away from home and spend all money. Some come back with AIDS killings innocent wives” (RF 35).

Others were more explicit in explaining AIDS as disease of ‘development’. A senior elder said:

“One of the impacts of development is that there are now new diseases because people started attending clubs in the night for dancing and drinking beer...bad behavior of men and women” (RM 46).

The cultural practice of ‘wife-sharing’ (i.e. collective masculinity expressed in sexuality) was also blamed for the rise in the rate of infections. Such large social networks are a major risk factor in HIV transmission (Mann *et al* 1996, cited in Coast 2000). Indeed, “the Maasai do not place great importance on being biological fathers of their own children” (Sassi 1979: 32). This practice was meant to be a mark of solidarity among the members of an age-set. This sexual freedom between men of the same age-set and their wives was said to be still prevalent albeit practiced in relatively different ways. In contemporary times (according to my respondents) for instance, some richer men were said to be more popular with the spouses of their age-sets while poor men on the other hand were not readily accepted. Thus the wife-sharing (according to MAAP officials) has become commercialized. Women whose husbands are poor will look out for the richer age-mates of their husbands:

“Today there is a lot of prostitution and social life has been distorted. Before, there was a lot of socialisation among age-mates and their wives” (RM 11).

All in all, the prevalence of the practice of wife-sharing was said to have considerably fallen owing to the prevalence of AIDS. However, when we relate this albeit low prevalence in the

practice to issues of prostitution, polygamy and wife-sharing, the multiplier effect in HIV transmission is obvious. The Kenyan Government also indicates that in the rural areas of Kajiado District, AIDS is attributed to cattle traders who are likely to have casual sex with commercial sex workers in urban centres where they sell cattle and what has often been referred to as 'wife sharing among age-mates' (Kenya 2002). It also adds that another factor is young girls being married off to old men who do not satisfy them sexually, thus forcing them to seek other sexual partners (*ibid*).

Another factor of AIDS transmission mentioned includes that of women going for long periods of time to sell their beadwork. Sometimes, the beadwork items do not command a good market, or do not sell fast enough, and some women as a result are suspected of indulging in prostitution to make ends meet. But as some of my respondents indicated there is another dimension to the impact of development on women as one elderly woman indicated: "Some women also feel free to drink and waste themselves in prostitution...*ati hii ni maendeleo!* (and this is development!)" (RM 33, an elderly woman). All in all, there are gender inequalities in men's greater mobility compared to that of women.

Cultural attitudes also make men vulnerable to HIV infection since they often emphasize sexual prowess, encourage men to have multiple sexual partners and prompt them to exercise their authority over women. As we saw in Chapter Four of this thesis, Maasai culture considered normal, and even sometimes encouraged young men and women to experiment sexually before marriage. The influence of this cultural attitude among the Maasai still lingers as I found in various discussions. It is considered somehow acceptable for even married men to have sex with many women. These cultural attitudes towards sex are leading to HIV infections. Indeed, idleness, as in the case of drugs, was mentioned as another cause of HIV morbidity as many young men and women had lots of time for sexual liaisons – 'to kill

boredom’ as they stated in a group discussion in the seminar organized to discuss AIDS and drug abuse.

### *9.3.3 Women are not donkeys! : Domestic violence*

“It is depressing that male violence, men’s desire for control of themselves and others, remains a deep signifier of masculinity for many males” (Whitehead 2002: 6).

Available statistics indicate that gender violence carried out by men against girls and women is tragically commonplace in many parts of the world (Thomson 2002) and has emerged as “one of the world’s most pressing problems” (Kimmel 2005: 197). The United Nations estimate that between 20% and 50% of all women worldwide have experienced physical violence at the hand of an intimate partner or family member (State of World Population report 2000, cited in Kimmel 2005). This violence takes many different forms including emotional and physical, sexual abuse, incest, dating and courtship violence, rape, forced early marriages, domestic violence and economic exploitation, including child pornography and commercial sex exploitation (*ibid*). Frequently regarded as a ‘women’s issue’, it is in reality a societal problem that affects not only women and girls, but also to men as their fathers, brothers and husbands ([www.unifem.org](http://www.unifem.org)). Domestic violence may serve as markers of masculinity in distinctly different ways and its causes may to an extent be located in ideologies embedded in patriarchal traditions (Cornwall and Lindisfarne 1994). Whitehead (2002) also observes that the crisis of masculinity that results in men behaving violently and abusively towards women, children and other men, animals, the earth itself, is less visible and not much talked of. Domestic violence among the Maasai, and many Kenyan communities, is mainly viewed in terms of physical attacks. This section centers around such physical attacks. But as we have seen earlier in this thesis, Maasai women are also exposed to violence in the form of economic exploitation (land being registered to men for instance) and commercial sex exploitation.

In 1981, Irene Dubel in her study on the sexual division of labour among the Maasai had predicted that women might become the subject of increasing violence by men, who take out their frustration about their deteriorating position. Dr Wangari Kuria again explains that when one is poor, two things happen; one enters into distress and thereafter depression, leading to uncontrolled anger and pain. The end result of these is threats and violence (The Sunday Nation Newspaper 12-12-2004). Sorensen (1990) has suggested that violence against women should be analyzed as a result of a new reality (in which men are at a loss) where new rules have not yet been created, and 'outdated traditions' are still made use of in order to impose male power (see for instance Silberschmidt 1999). To some extent, my findings are in agreement with this view.

My investigation of attitudes towards wife-beating among Maasai men and women elicited mixed reactions, which ranged from acceptance, to questioning and rejection. Some men gave the following reasons why they thought it was a good idea to beat wives:

"Wife beating is good...men are there to discipline everybody. My grandfather advised me that wives should be beaten but not much or without mistake" (RM 13, a senior *moran- olcekut*).

"Wife beating is okay as a wife has a childish mind, and thus should be punished when are they wrong. Men should be given authority by law to punish their wives. Since "*Italala*" (old-age group) in our culture, women were punished and were observed to have a lot of respect as result" (RM 09, a senior elder).

One of the oldest men I met also explained:

"It is good to beat wives when they do wrong. They should be disciplined but not hurt. In the past, when a wife did wrong, a sheep was prepared first, then the wife was thoroughly beaten and finally the sheep was slaughtered to give her the liquid fat to drink as a medicine" (RM 6, senior elder).

Women are also implicated in legitimating domestic violence as the responses below from women respondents attest:

"Wife beating is good...*kerrepayu* (advisable) – this always kept women at attention. Kept them taking care of family's resources in the absence of the husband. Women have become careless because they are not beaten.... especially educated women – they don't fear their husbands" (RF 4).

“Wife beating shows the clear difference between man and woman. It also shows *enkitoria* (authority) between man and woman...man is the head of home and can discipline everybody in the family” (RF 37).

T. N. K: “Why do you think men behave this way?” RF 37: “This might be because of stress of poverty. Lack of jobs is a major problem”.

“Wife beating was bad but didn’t prevent homes from being made. ‘*Mejaisho ene nkolong’nabo*’ (one day’s problem cannot kill), but should not be so recurrent to harm” (RF 47, she was married but went back to her parents after her marriage collapsed).

The above remarks by both men and women originate in a culture nurtured by male domination and show that many people in the study area, and indeed elsewhere, still strongly hold on to the patriarchal ideology that position men as the controllers of their families.

However many men and women were against the practice:

“Wife beating is very bad ...women also feel pain! Men should also consider the pain women feel during birth” (RF 40, unmarried woman).

“Wife beating is very bad. They should not be beaten... “*Ore enkang’naa enkitok* (home is a woman)...if she is beaten then home is no longer there” (RF 4, an elderly woman)

“Instead of beating, take a step, take her home and solve the problem through talking. Punish her through other means such as not giving her money” (RM 25, a junior elder).

“Many men beat their wives. But why beat *olarasi* (your rib)? They are joined to become one thing – wives aren’t animals – There should talk and solve the problem” RF 35, a middle-aged elder woman).

“Women are not donkeys but people” (RF 33, an elderly woman and a first wife).

Some thought that wife beating is outdated in modern times:

“Wife beating was accepted our fathers’ times. But now things have changed. Change should be accepted and men stop beating wives and seek the good alternative of dialogue” (RM 36, a junior elder, a university graduate).

Others thought it was an issue of following the formal law of the state:

“Wives should not be beaten because the law doesn’t allow that, and nowadays some women are educated therefore they might sue you for punishing them. But in the past,



women were punished but after the coming of *maendeleo*, this has ceased” (RM 4, a junior elder).

“People shouldn’t punish their wives by beating because somebody who is married should be mature to know what she is doing or to do her duties. Also today, there is no permission for any man or husband to beat his wife because it is against the law” (RM 44, a junior elder - studying in a bible study college).

Land sales (thus development) again, like in the case of alcohol abuse, featured prominently among the reasons that trigger domestic violence:

“Land sales have broken marriages because of domestic violence...wives go away” (RF 35, a junior elder’s wife).

Alcohol abuse by both women and men was also directly linked to domestic violence:

“Nowadays, it is not fit to beat a wife but some women drink a lot and are beaten by husbands because they for example refuse to milk the cows” (RM 17, a senior elder).

A young man talks of the tribulations of his family in the hands of an abusive father:

“*Oloiturua ake ele mzee*” (this old man - is just a devil), if I buy a sheep, he sells in my absence. He is a drunkard – so he uses any resources available to drink. He takes the locally available brews at the *olturoto* shopping centre. He is always beating mum and it has become the habit. Even he chased mum, but she came back because *mzee* wanted to sell all the land” (RM 28, a junior moran).

Although the *mzee* cannot escape the responsibility of the problems and suffering he has brought upon his family, it is rather obvious, as we have seen in previous chapters that the social economic changes (such as privatisation and commoditisation of land), that have happened and still happening have also played a role.

One woman respondent however saw development in a positive light and said that it was responsible for the fewer cases of violence against women:

“One impact of development is that some men do not beat their wives as in the past. They have dropped many cultural practices and some men now do work in the kitchen to help their wives” (RF 38, a junior elder’s wife)

The issue of husbands/men being subjected to violence by women also surfaced in my research. Kimmel (2005: 214) argues that acknowledging assaults by women is important

because they “put women in danger of much severe retaliation by men”. On this issue some respondents said:

“Yes there are few who are beaten by their wives...*lakini hii ni matharao tuu!* (but this is just showing disrespect to a man) (Group discussion with men).

“Today’s men are even beaten by women. Yet men struggle hard to provide for women” (RM 15).

“It is not common for wives to beat husbands but there is one case, the man was very old and wife younger and stronger... so the man was badly beaten...the man has many wives and youngest one beat him” (RM 17, a senior elder).

“Some wives hate their husbands and when husbands try to be beat them, they hit back. Wives should be beaten when they wrong. Wives are beaten when they get drunk” (RM 23, a middle aged - *olcekut*).

One informant suggested that it could be a result of women knowing their rights:

“Some men are also ruled by women. Women have known their rights and are giving their husbands stress” (RM 36, an unmarried junior elder).

This section has demonstrated how men’s power manifests itself discursively in the phenomena of domestic violence, based on the discourse of man as the controller and that such violence is to an extent socially sanctioned. Since pre-colonial times, men’s control over women was often expressed in their ‘right’ to punish them physically (Dubel 1981: 10). Kimmel (2005: 214) argues that such aggression, “must also be embedded within the larger framework of gender inequality”. Maasai men’s unequal control over means of survival, especially land, has been seen to contribute to violence. ‘Traditionally’ among the Maasai, as Talle (1988: 83) points out, “agnatic kin would take action against a man who repeatedly beats or mistreats his wife/wives or children”. Often such a man would be ostracised by his age-mates (Hollis 1904). However, as relations and economic relations get more individualized such instruments of censure have been greatly compromised.

## 9.5 Conclusion

This chapter further shows the multiplicity and complexities of Maasai masculine identities as they engage with the realities of the discourses and practices of development. The chapter also shows that a striking range of diversity has emerged in male lifestyles among the Maasai as portrayed by the intersecting discourses and practices of masculinity. We have seen that many Maasai men today seek to forge new ways of being men that embrace the claims of the past and the demands of the present. We have seen that consumption of 'modern' goods and the adoption of modern lifestyles appear to create even more diverse ways through which identity is being established and maintained.

This embracing of consumer culture, while not new, indicates that the Maasai have and are further being gradually drawn into the orbit of the global capitalist market economy. Thus men's sense of self and how others view them is highly influenced by economic circumstances and, also his generosity. The popularization of consumer culture is however creating some unprecedented wants for 'modern/western' goods and services against a background of increasing levels of deprivation. Again I argue that, owing to the high incidence of poverty among the Maasai, many find it hard to access these 'modern' markers of masculinity that they aspire to have and this is in itself a cause of anxiety in their masculine identity. Many men are frustrated in their attempts to claim such ideals of masculinity. By implication, they suffer as they try to adjust their sense of themselves with the demands of the society that they live in and which to an extent, makes them.

In addition, we see that the attainment of such aspects of a hegemonic model of masculinity that is gaining popularity among the Maasai is connected to the global power actors and, with the attendant risk of increased masculine anxieties as only very few can are able to attain this 'prescribed' status. Thus to many men, their sense of themselves as men is much influenced by their economic status. As we also saw in Chapter Seven, an increasing number of men

have increasingly become dependent on their spouses to cater for much of the upkeep of their families.

Other than wealth, the centrality of values of generosity and respect to the construction of masculinity also came out quite clearly in describing an ideal man or what Silberschmidt (1999) called 'respectable men' in her study of the Kisii community in Kenya. Different identities were also seen to be constructed differently in different social settings for instance the case of Maasai women wearing trousers in towns and not in rural areas. Many Maasai women are also now wearing pigtails, formerly a preserve of men. In effect, such women have dislodged the association between trousers, pigtails and men, practices that cause some anxiety to some men. Masculinities and femininities therefore vary not only over time but also with places.

This chapter also shows that, although practices such as the use of alcohol and domestic violence have been in Maasai society for long, modernization has greatly altered their frequency and severity leading to even more dangerous or harmful masculinities/identities. Alcohol consumption has been fuelled by (among other factors) the state revenue production through a flourishing beer industry, which is also linked to international capital. In addition, owing to changes in lifestyles and livelihoods, Maasai men and women are adopting different survival strategies that are exposing them to HIV/AIDS infections. Thus we can conclude that to some extent, poverty and AIDS are mutually constitutive and reinforcing.

The gendered access to control of resources is also implicated in drug abuse, domestic violence and the prevalence of HIV AIDS. Thus the ideology of man as controller/manager embedded and continues the struggle to retain the status quo in this socially and economically fluid environment. This is not to say that such struggles have not been there within the Maasai society for a long time, but to point out that with development/modernization, the struggles seem to have accelerated and more unfamiliar identities are being created.

All these further point to the multiplicities of meanings of masculinity among the Maasai. We can thus finally conclude that these contemporary transitions in Maasai masculinities are part of what Nurse (2004: 5) calls “long-term, large-scale transformation in the capitalist world system”.

## **Chapter Ten: Conclusion**

### **10.1 Introduction**

This thesis documents the impact of development on the masculine identities of the Maasai in Ngong, Kenya. It has explored the main forces related to ‘development’ and how such forces have influenced the lifestyles and livelihoods of Maasai over the past century and how this has impacted on gender roles and gender relations. The thesis also sought to investigate the existence or otherwise of a ‘crisis’ in Maasai masculinities and how development has been implicated in such a crisis. The thesis also focuses on the role of power in the interplay between development and gender. In addition, the research explored the opportunities that ‘development’ may have created and how this may have affected identities. This chapter presents the conclusions of the research by summarising and discussing findings in the context of the research questions posed and the theoretical perspectives utilized, namely postcolonialism and the theory of hegemonic masculinities. Implications for theory, policy and practice, and further research are explored.

### **10.2 Maasai and the forces of *maendeleo***

Up to the eve of colonization, the Maasai ethnic group practiced a highly specialized form of nomadic pastoralism, which generated cohesion within the community and served to mark it off symbolically, economically and socially from others. This thesis argues that developmentalism has shattered this familiar universe and establishes that over the past century in Kenya, both the colonial and independent states have tried to change and ‘develop’ the pastoral Maasai by means of a variety of modernizing undertakings (read development) resulting in major and varied changes to their lifestyles and livelihoods. The colonial and postcolonial state, the church and other forces of modernization have been implicated in these changes. More specifically, these ‘developmental’ undertakings have included policies and

practices on land, livestock, education, sexuality and introduction of Christianity, among others. These modernizing undertakings have by and large been characterised by imbalances of power, and grounded in the 'civilizing mission'. Indeed, when we scrutinize these policies, practices and the discourses surrounding them through the lens of postcolonialism, we begin to understand how central power/knowledge has been in this 'development' project. The research shows that the exercise of power/knowledge was instrumental in the rise of hegemonic ideologies and discourses that were established during the colonial period. In particular the research has clarified that the colonial project was a gendered enterprise, by analysing the way in which the hegemonic masculinities of the colonizer were nurtured in British public schools and universities. Borrowing from Donaldson (1993: 646), we can say that they were nurtured to be "weavers of the fabrics of hegemony". From the perspectives of the theory of hegemonic masculinities, these colonial 'hegemonic masculinities' were used as a force to subordinate, marginalise and destabilise Maasai masculinities in a number of ways. From the outset, 'knowledge' about the Maasai depicted them as primitive, irrational savages with 'abnormal' sexual impulses, unable to govern themselves, and in need of being 'saved from themselves' ('developed'!) by exogenous forces.

Development discourses during and after the colonial period have also persistently depicted the Maasai as irrational users of their land and livestock resources and thus in need of reorganization. The production of such knowledge amounts to misrepresentation and marginalization of their indigenous knowledge (nomadic pastoral production strategies) nurtured and accumulated over the centuries. Indeed, such misrepresentations ignored the fact that the pastoral Maasai way of life was a creative social, economic and cultural adaptation to an environment that they utilized to exploit their resources in a sustainable way. As a consequence, discourses that 'rationalized' intervention were generated and drew heavily on the rhetoric of 'development' as a linear process where they were supposed to move from an assumed primitive to a developed/civilized state, following the trajectory of the 'civilised' West. By means of this 'Othering', the Maasai were, to borrow from Morrell and Swart

(2004: 94), “deprived of a voice”. Such ‘Othering’ camouflaged the real intentions of colonialism and neo-colonialism - to exploit their resources through appropriation. A good example of such appropriation is the alienation of their land resources, which is arguably one of the single most important factors in discussing the forces that have impacted on their way of life. In addition, there have been persistent efforts to curb the social institutions that were vital to Maasai identity and culture. This has again been achieved through the devaluing, or ‘Othering’ of such institutions. The most important case in point has been the Maasai *manyatta* system, which, as we found, was a vital institution for transmitting cultural values.

Another example that illustrates this has been the case of the making and selling of alcohol. During the colonial period, discourses emerged that denegated the alcohol produced by the Maasai and indeed other Africans in Kenya. Today, the legacies of such discourses can be seen in the numerous policies and practices such as the proscription of indigenous alcohol in favour of ‘European bottled beer’ whose manufacture and sale are dominated by western interests. These unequal power relations also continue to manifest themselves in maintaining the status quo such that, for instance, much of the land that was alienated from the Maasai remains an issue that is ‘conveniently’ forgotten as ‘history’. In general, this research argues that efforts to ‘develop’ the Maasai have often been ill-conceived and mainly governed by interests that have had little to do with their interests. Development has meant an intrusion into their lives and institutions and their integration into the world capitalist system has had radical effects on their lifestyles and livelihoods. The Maasai have thus seen the erosion of not only their natural resource base but also cultural values. My argument is that it is hypocritical for the West to talk about justice and democracy without dealing with the issues of human rights violations emanating from this domination.

However, there is also evidence that Maasai have not always been resistant to change, and they have been able to discern some positive aspects of development and take advantage of them. They have for instance taken advantage of western education but are wary about some



of the negative influences that this education may have on their way of life. One may also argue that, while marginalization and poverty are not exclusive features of the Maasai community in Kenya, and indeed does not affect all Maasai in the same manner, it is important to appreciate how Maasai livelihoods and lifestyles are threatened, but not totally destroyed, by the forces associated with the 'development' project. To gain deeper insights into the consequences of development on gender relations among the Maasai, let us focus on changes in gender relations and roles.

### **10.3 Changing gender relations and roles?**

In this thesis, I have argued that the intrusion by modernization and related development has had far-reaching and varied impacts on Maasai gender relations. The workings of capitalist development have radically altered Maasai social structures, relationships and order, as well as material standards of living. We have explored the reordering of Maasai family and labour and argued that this reordering was legitimized by discourses of progress. It is important however that these discourses are not seen as "monolithic impositions on hapless people" as McClintock (1995: 234) would put it. Instead, these discourses have themselves been continuously contested.

The dynamics of gender is apparent in some contexts where gender stereotypes and identities are changing alongside economic relations and interpersonal arrangements between men and women. I have for instance shown that increasingly, the relationship between the constitution of domestic space, gender and identity are undergoing change. More importantly, the loss of their land has had enduring consequences for the relationships and distribution of authority between spouses within the family and for gender roles and relations in general. Declining land resources has caused severe hardships for both men and women who have responded differently to the resultant economic crisis. More specifically, the thesis establishes that some

'development' policies and practices have been exposed as contributing to gender inequalities. For instance, during the colonial period, men were assumed to be the sole owners of livestock in their capacity as household heads thus reinforcing their control over what were essentially household resources. This was achieved through taxation and subsequent monetisation and commoditisation of their livestock. Men were expected to sell livestock and pay taxes on behalf of the family. In later years, the granting of individual land ownership rights almost exclusively to male 'household heads' achieved similar results by marginalizing women's usufruct rights to land. Indeed, women's insecurity of tenure remains a fundamental source of economic marginalization and of tension in gender relations. In terms of Connell's theory of hegemony, these policies and practices expanded the structural advantages of men over women and aided men in 'cashing in on the patriarchal dividend'. Development has been implicated in discourses of masculinity, which to a large measure, have shaped the power relations underpinning these gendered and inequitable access to resources among the Maasai. Indeed, the Maasai encounter with the British and later generalized western imperialism disturbed the pre-existing power relations through the opportunistic and exploitative interference with gender power regimes.

Ideas that gender and age hierarchies dictate the rights and duties and obligations of men women and children in the family still hold sway. However, the research also illustrates the negotiated nature of the gendered division of labour and resources in households and the dynamic and shifting nature of power relations between men and women. Indeed, male domination of women in the era of 'development' does not map out quite clearly and indeed, inspite of ideologies of male control over property, women's position in the property system makes them far from powerless. In connection to this, the research indicates that, even though structurally subordinated to men, women have aggressively responded to the challenges of economic hardships. I have for instance shown that the domination of Maasai women is alleviated by the fact that women enjoy extensive rights to milk and milk products and to the

production and trading of beadwork. Thus this essentialist notion of gender roles has been empowering to women. Indeed, commoditization has provided women with many opportunities, and the fact that many now have incomes has created a new awareness and a sense of autonomy. It would however be important to establish how much this 'empowerment' of women may have concurrently resulted to an increase in their responsibilities in the household as some men's responsibilities seem to decrease (such as in providing for the household).

We have also found that the ideology of men as managers/controllers still lingers among certain individual men and women and especially, but not exclusively, the elderly. This is seen in the acceptance of the ideas that men can still control women through violence and the view that men should not get involved in performing domestic chores. This denotes the existence of some essentialist notions in gender relations. Michael Kaufman (1994) coined the concept of *gender work* to refer to the process of internalization of gender relations, which is seen as an element in the construction of our personalities. Kaufman reasoned that consciously or unconsciously, we help to generate, reinforce and perpetuate patriarchal systems of male dominance. Drawing from the theory of hegemonic masculinities, we can here conclude that such ideologies help in creating and perpetuating the 'hegemony' of men while at the same time subordinating the position of women in gender relations. In the same token, the Maasai men and women who support such ideologies can be said to be complicit in the subordination of women through gender violence and the heaping of the burden of domestic chores on women. In terms of the theory of hegemony, such women are also complicit in their own subordination.

My findings also show that far from existing as a homogenous group, Maasai men and indeed women experience their gender in complex and at times contradictory ways. Indeed, while it is true that imperialism had varied impacts on Maasai gender regimes, many such regimes have survived even though in transformed states. In conclusion, it is beyond question that for

the Maasai, colonialism and its legacies (read development) have fundamentally altered their identities and way of life and as a result contemporary identities are now quite complex. While this is in line with the argument in postcolonial theory that “there is no pure culture, and that cultures continually make and unmake themselves” (Ahluwalia 2001: 9), the unequal power relations between the West and the ‘Third World’ is often not made explicit. To paraphrase Miescher and Lindsay (2003), how Maasai men and women see and represent themselves, and how gender relations are organized and promoted, are shaped by large socio-economic, cultural, and religious transformations.

We can therefore conclude that the Kenyan Maasai gender relations are historically produced at the intersection and through the interplay of local and trans-local cultural, social and political economic forces, including cross-cutting relationships of age (including age-sets and age-grades), class and, indeed, race. This study also concludes that gender relations as they currently exist among the Maasai must be understood within the wider context of Africa’s peripheral and dependent position within the global capitalist economy. This is because, as we have seen, most Maasai men and women are struggling to survive, and in some cases, prosper, within the constraints which global capitalism imposes on their society. In its own specific context, this study also confirms Hodgson’s (1999) assertion that gender is produced, maintained and transformed by means of the cultural and social (and I add, economic) relations of power between women and men, and also among women and among men.

#### **10.4 A Crisis of masculinity?**

This research also sought to explore the notion of a crisis in Maasai masculinities and how development is implicated in the crisis. As a number of writers have recently pointed out, in the recent past, ‘masculinity’ has been seen to be in ‘crisis’. However, there is no agreement about the exact nature of this ‘crisis’ or indeed whether this is the most appropriate

description for the changes afoot (Petersen 1998). Turning to recent literature in the north, data indicate specific male depression caused by economic marginalization and lack of self-esteem. These depressions are characterised by increasing aggressive behaviour, lack of self-control, over consumption of alcohol and often suicide (cf. Sabo and Gordon 1995). In Japan the rate of male suicide as a result of economic decline in the 1990s has also be noted to have risen sharply (Roberson and Suzuki 2003). As White (1999) also points out that, “masculinity is deeply implicated in the harm men experience in their own lives and cause in the lives of others” (cited in Cleaver 2002: 9). Petersen (2003) also equates the personal implications of the crisis to a loss of gender role and/or identity. Connell (1995) explains that the crisis is a product of several factors including dynamics in power and production relations and their impacts on gender relations. In power relations, he locates the crisis in the, “historical collapse of the legitimacy of patriarchal power and a global movement for the emancipation of women” (1995: 84). The resultant tension leads some men to assert their hegemony, while others support the feminist reforms (*ibid*). In production mechanisms, Connell explains the crisis as emanating from massive institutional changes which lead to women’s increased participation in the money economy and gaining more power in the household ‘at the expense’ of men. On the other hand, patriarchal control of wealth is sustained by inheritance mechanisms, which, according to Connell (1995), insert women into the property system as owners. Connell also contends that the crisis also emanates from tensions that develop around sexual inequality and men’s rights in marriage.

Taking cue from the above discussion, this thesis views the crisis in masculinity generally in terms of the harm men experience in their own lives and cause in the lives of others and has identified numerous ways in which ‘development’ is implicated in the crisis among the Maasai. As we have noted above, some ‘development’ efforts have antagonized gender relations between Maasai men and women and also relations between men. I have pointed to the role of history in creating differentially constructed masculinities as an important consideration in understanding the crisis in Maasai masculinities. I have for instance argued

for the need to recognize the role colonialism played in the construction of Maasai men as the 'Other', as hypersexual, unintelligent, and politically threatening. Effectively, this amounted to the marginalisation of Maasai masculinities and, I argue the 'creation' of a 'crisis', (not least in the minds of the colonizer). In addition, colonial practices of divide and rule which attempted to elevate the masculinity of the elders at the expense of *moranhood* masculinities of the younger men were also instrumental in exacerbating tension in the Maasai organization of male gender. I have argued that Maasai men are also in oppressive relationships with women and this by itself signals another dimension of the 'crisis' where men are not just facing problems but are also themselves part of the problem. We have for instance seen how this is the case such as in domestic violence, the sale of land by men at the expense of their families and so on.

The 'crisis' in the Maasai context has also been generated by changes in lifestyles occasioned by 'modernization', making them for instance more vulnerable to alcoholism and drug abuse and HIV/AIDS infections. Media images are implicated here as global capital struggles to maintain and expand the market shares for their 'modern' products. Such images for instance project cigarette smoking, drinking 'bottled European beer', having a mobile phone, and owning a car as making a man attractive, and a measure of one another's success. In this regard, I have argued that capitalist development has affected Maasai men in achieving the masculinity that it prescribes as they experience a discrepancy between what they aspire to do, and what they are actually able to do. The irony is that even as they have been victims of colonial and neocolonial exploitation, they are still expected to achieve or aspire to achieve the 'standards' of the idealized western middle class. In this scenario, the 'ordinary man' is made to feel inferior and insecure unless he can measure up. The obvious weakness of this way of looking at it is that we assume that all Maasai men have accepted such masculine ideals, but do not have the means to carry them out. However, it is out of the question that such media images and the generalized 'modernisation' discourses are causing tension in Maasai men's sense of worth in contemporary times. Development for the Maasai has

precipitated a crisis in male identity in that it has brought about many new (to Maasai) demands in form of ideals and practices that define what it means to be 'a man'.

This research has also established that the solidarity that previously existed between men (and indeed, the wider Maasai society) has gradually been eroded particularly by the introduction of commoditization and privatization of their social and economic relationships. Increasingly, the advent of money-centred values in Maasai society has also led to deterioration in human relations and the individual's increasing alienation. I have also argued that the introduction of western education has had some impacts on Maasai masculinities that have exacerbated their sense of 'crisis'. I have argued that owing to various circumstances, the Maasai have been 'left behind' in terms of accessing formal education leading to many of them being unable to access higher paying jobs in the formal and informal sector. Low educational attainments and the resultant joblessness instil a sense of low self-esteem and marginality among them.

As we have noted in section 10.3, one of the positive things that the change to commercialisation has brought is in the economic empowerment of women as various profitable avenues open up for them especially in the sale of milk and beadwork. This has enabled them to gain more power in the household. Both men and women interviewed admitted that more and more women had taken economic command of the home. However, this state of affairs has aggravated some men's sense of 'crisis' as they feel that they are losing power and control over their families through the erosion of their authority as household heads. They perceived their 'traditional' roles of 'managers/controllers' of the home as becoming marginalized. Indeed, my findings indicate that men's current crisis is strongly tied to their loss of power within families and to the fact that decisions within and about households are increasingly being taken out of their own hands. As such, while a patriarchal ideology may be embodied in the lives of socially dominant men, this does not mean that all men are successful patriarchs. In fact, few men match the blueprint. Such men

have made attempts to assert themselves through reconstructions of 'traditional' male identity using reworked myths from the pre-colonial past. Reverting to this framework is one way of escaping and coping with the personal uncertainty that change induces. The same tendencies were observed in studies carried out by Silberschmidt (1999, 2001) in western Kenya. The bottom line here is that the ideologies that position men as household heads and thus providers and controllers in their families generate a lot of pressure for men to 'act like men' and a humiliating social stigma if they fail to measure up. Fear of becoming powerless and the consequences of this should be viewed as part of the crisis in masculinity among the Maasai. However, Maasai men are adopting adaptive masculinities that aid their ability to cope in a situation of economic and social marginalization. Some have appropriated certain notions of Maasai culture and blend it with modernity.

In conclusion, we can say that Maasai masculine identities have been reshaped by social dynamics in which class, race and gender relations have been simultaneously at play. As such, the meanings of masculinity appear to differ between people of different age groups, educational attainments, economic status, religious affiliations etc, differences that seem to have a bearing on the individual's view of and experiences with development. It is clear that the current constitution of masculine identities causes problems to men as well as to women. We can also conclude by emphasising here that in the analysis of crisis in masculinities among the Maasai and indeed others who are and have been under colonial and neocolonial forces, cognizance must be given to impact of these factors as this makes their case unique compared to the recent analysis of the crisis in the west or in the more economically prosperous countries. Thus the use of the western models in the conceptualization of the 'crisis' in masculinity in the context of the 'South', must be done with caution. One thing to note here, in the borrowing of the crisis model from Euro-American contexts, is that many of the 'victims' of the crisis there have not had to contend with such dehumanisation. The point is that in theorizing the crisis as in the case of the Maasai, we have to consider issues of structural inequalities and thus unequal power relations between the 'North' and the 'South'.



## 10.5 Theoretical implications

“We need to think about theoretical practices differently, evaluating theories for their ability to handle and explain concrete problems or issues or their ability to open up the possibility of praxis. Our theoretical methods should be less referential, less reverential and more contextualized” (Raghuram and Madge, in press: 18).

In the spirit of the above comment, I now attempt a discussion of the implications of my research to postcolonialism and the theory of hegemonic masculinities. Suffice to mention that inevitably some of the implications have already been mentioned or suggested in previous sections and there is a risk of some repetitions. This is however done for the sake of emphasis and clarity.

### *10.5.1 Implications for postcolonialism*

In this section, I show that my research has made a number of contributions to postcolonialism. To begin with, this study’s contribution lies in the fact that it is the first to systematically and explicitly utilise postcolonial theoretical approaches to study the Kenyan Maasai people’s experience with development. As we have noted, postcolonial studies have by and large neglected the African situation. Postcolonialism has also been accused of its emphasis on textual analysis and neglect of the material legacies of colonialism. My study thus enriches postcolonial studies by grounding the material and discursive legacies of colonialism in a concrete African/Maasai situation and disrupting the narrative of the ‘Other’ that has been embedded in colonial discourse about the Maasai. In a way, the thesis thus also contributes to what Madge (1992: 19) refers to as, “bringing the debate of representation up to date”. This thesis also contributes by illustrating the potential of development as a focus for postcolonial studies, and indeed, the potential to ‘decolonise’ development discourses.

Cheryl McEwan (2003: 342) points out that, “realists accuse postcolonialism of ignoring human rights issues”. In connection to this issue, my thesis has raised some important human

rights concerns. The issue of the historical injustices occasioned by the alienation of Maasai land is an appropriate case in point here. For the Maasai, injustices of colonialism continues in the present through modern systems of law and government, silencing or severely restricting their ability to contest these dispossessions. In this connection, my research also contributes to postcolonial endeavours by confirming that the colonial past of the Maasai is not over and concluded but continues, albeit in different forms. This thesis thus substantiates the contention by postcolonial theorists that colonialism and its aftermath have and continue to have debilitating effects on the lives of people in the former colonies like Kenya. As we noted in Chapter Two, one of the concerns of postcolonialism is to analyse the legacies of colonialism. Indeed, the injustices pertaining to colonial land alienation are now becoming important human rights issues central to postcolonial debates (see for instance Young 2003).

In some ways the thesis also contributes to recent debates on postcolonial methodologies (see Raghuram and Madge, in press and Jack and Westwood, in press) and indicates the need to research *for* the marginalized 'Other' and not *on* them. While this thesis is not claiming to have achieved this, it can be seen as a pioneering attempt upon which others can build. The thesis has also contributed in problematizing the dominant/hegemonic knowledge about development such as the received wisdom of the neo-liberal paradigm about the supremacy of market forces that have resulted in the privatisation and individualisation of the Maasai people's economic and social life. It has also exposed the colonial and neo-colonial power relations that underpin wildlife conservation. The aim has been to bring out the voices of the marginalised Maasai whose voices and concerns have been lost in the hegemonic discourses, which are, indeed, important concerns of postcolonialism. This is thus an effort at decolonizing knowledge about the Maasai.

We have also noted that the themes of *ambivalence*, *resistance*, and *hybridity* are important preoccupations of postcolonialism. The thesis has pointed to numerous acts and sites where these themes have been enacted. To begin with, and as we have noted, the 'Othering' of the

Maasai was instrumental in justifying colonialism and entailed the essentialist depiction of the Maasai immoral, irrational and uncivilized. In connection to this and following Fanon (1968), I hereby argue that the white man's (colonizer) self-perception as moral, rational and civilized makes his identity and that of the Maasai mutually constitutive and in this way (in Homi Bhabha's 1994 terms), the notion of hybridity breaks down the essentializing, binary opposition between the colonized and the colonizer, the Maasai and the British.

The competing influences of Christian and Maasai 'traditional' cultural ideals as noted in the case of the 2003 Kisaju *orng'esherr* ceremony denotes both hybridity and resistance. More broadly, the notion of hybridity can today be seen in the variety of cultural adaptations by the Maasai in which they have blended their own cultural values with western values such as in clothing, religion, education and so on. We can claim that currently the Maasai gender identity is hybrid, and characterised by, borrowing from Sylvester (2003: 709-710), "a complex process of cultural hybridization encompassing manifold and multiple modernities and traditions". The point here is that though colonial traditions of representation persists, they are also reworked and resisted".

In line with this, another key contribution of postcolonial studies to postcolonial history is in the recognition that the lines that separate indigenous and foreign knowledges are blurred (Sylvester 1999). As Abrahamsen (2003: 205) also notes:

"For postcolonial writers, hybridity is not inherently bad nor does it signify the total domination of the colonized. Instead, hybridity signifies the failure of the colonial power to fully dominate its subjects and shows their creativity and resilience".

Indeed, hybridity is seen more recently to signify local agency through creative adaptation, interpretation and transformation of western cultural symbols and practices, and shows that "formerly colonized peoples are not passive victims in the face of all-powerful western" culture (*ibid*: 205-6). In this context, selling their culture to tourists such as in beadwork and other cultural items and enactments (the enduring *moran* image for instance), kills two birds with one stone by conserving their heritage as they make money out of it. Such conservation

of their image is not only materially beneficial to them but also helps resist the hegemony of western culture. While the Maasai have not simply moved from beyond colonialism, colonial relations and discourses have also not survived unchanged. However, in my view, most forms of hybridity are not adequately disruptive of the colonial and neo-colonial power regimes and indeed may be reinforcing the unequal power relations in 'development' between the 'north' and the Maasai 'south' (e.g religion, clothing, western education and so on as, in my view, they also serve in reorienting the mindset of the Maasai towards the West). In addition, some of the enactments of mimicry have resulted in tension in gender relations. A case in point is controversy that has been generated by the issue of Maasai and indeed Kenyan women's wearing of trousers. As has been shown, trousers are a colonial legacy that men appropriated to the exclusion of women.

This research has sought to recover the subject positions of the marginalized Maasai and is an attempt to retell their experiences from a counter hegemonic standpoint. While I do not claim to have spoken on behalf of the marginalized Maasai as such, I have however, to borrow from Abrahamsen (2003: 207), "made an attempt to mark the space of the silenced" Maasai in the practice and discourses of development. In some ways, this thesis can also be read as a celebration of Maasai resistance to subjugation. We have seen that they have in one way or other resisted or contested their subjugation as for instance the alienation of their land, the introduction of western education, the disbanding of the *manyatta* system and so on. This research also has some implications for gender and the theory of hegemonic masculinities as discussed below.

#### *10.5.2 Implications to gender and the theory of hegemonic masculinities*

This research has contributed to the recent focus by geographers and others in the social sciences in the study of masculinities and the theories of masculinities. The theory of

hegemonic masculinities in particular has provided some important insights in the analysis of power relations at various levels including the family, community and indeed other wider levels. It has for instance made it possible to analyse the political, economic and cultural power relations that underpin the gendered and inequitable division of labour and inequalities in the control of resources. We have also seen that from the colonial period, the subjectification of the 'Other' (Maasai masculinities) through 'difference', agreeing with Nurse (2004), was fundamental to the constitution of white men's hegemonic masculinity during colonialism. This suggests an articulation between postcolonialism (especially its focus on the process on 'Othering' in colonial discourses) and the theory of hegemonic masculinities. We can also say that this is enriching to postcolonialism since as Moore-Gilbert (1997) has it, "when it comes to gender, the impact of postcolonialism has been disappointing" (cited in Morrell and Swart 2004: 95).

The importance of this study also lies in the fact that it locates a study of the 'crisis in masculinities' in the 'crisis in development' and argues that these 'twin crisis' are intricately connected. In a way the study also contributes in showing that gender studies should not be taken to be synonymous with women, but rather should focus on both women and men. This has previously not been the case especially in the Kenyan context where gender issues have been widely perceived as solely issues to do with women.

This research also confirms the claim by the theory of hegemonic masculinities that masculinities are multiple. Indeed, there appear to be different understandings of masculinity and different ways of 'doing' masculinity as is manifested by the diversity of views, opinions and experiences. However, in appropriating the concept of the multiple masculinities from western contexts, we must also again take cognisance of the role of colonialism and its legacies on the Maasai and indeed the formerly colonised 'South'. Indeed, the idea of multiple masculinities is not new among the Maasai and indeed Africa and the so-called 'Third World'

and from postcolonial perspectives can be seen as part of the legacy of colonialism. As Ahluwalia (2001: 11) opines;

“While much has been made of the multiplicities of masculine identities, a conceptualisation in which postcolonialism has played a key role, it is pertinent to remember that for most of Africa, and Third World Countries, such identities have always been prominent. They are a legacy of colonial rule, which operated through a policy of ‘divide and rule’”.

This study has also confirmed that although pre-colonial Maasai masculinities were multiple in their own right, (see Chapter Four) colonialism and its legacies have been quite instrumental in the creation of an even wider multiplicity of masculinities.

This research also indicates that to a large measure, gender identity is still shaped by cultural constructions where men and women are still expected to adhere to prescribed gender roles on account of their biological difference. Gender relations have thus been found to be to some extent essentialised as sex roles. We have however also noted that the essentialisation of gender roles is changing as both Maasai men and women take up roles that have no gender bias. This is probably one positive, unintended aspect of development (especially in house-building and the sharing of domestic chores).

Western theories of masculinities tend to emphasise gender privilege. In the Maasai context we must go beyond this and bring in issues of colonial and neo-colonial exploitation. Unlike Connell’s emphasis on patriarchy, more concern should be directed at how both Maasai men and women are and have been exploited and their cultural and social life influenced by colonialism and its legacies and how gender relations change as a result. As Akbar (1992: xi) opines, we should acknowledge that there are “some unique problems black men and women face differently”. As we have noted, for the Maasai, relative to many white western men, the crisis of masculinities is exacerbated by the fact that they are, in addition to changes happening in the global economy, also faced with the challenges posed by the legacies of colonialism. Speaking more broadly, in the analysis and theorising of African masculinities, issues pertaining to the legacies of the transatlantic slave trade, colonialism and neo-colonial

subjugation must be incorporated. This, in my view would be strengthening the pro-feminist approaches/theories of masculinity.

As some writers such as Cornwall (2000) have noted, useful as the idea of 'hegemonic masculinities' is, in practice, it is often difficult to work out which masculinity is 'hegemonic' or even what is hegemonic about particular representations of maleness; "What is valorised by some, might be, for others, hardly a way of being to others, hardly a way of being to admire, let alone emulate" (pp. 23). Another issue in discussing the theorisation of gender is that we always run the risk of biological essentialism when we dichotomise men's and women's roles even if such roles are seen as socially constructed (Cleaver 2002). This might be a 'necessary evil' since as we have seen, in real life, gender essentialism is rife. Indeed, this awareness should motivate us to seek ways and means of bringing change which eliminates this anomaly.

Connell's theory of hegemonic masculinities however is still quite useful in the study of masculinities. The theory for instance helps identify power as an important aspect in the construction of gender. One of its major strengths is that rather than seeing gender as a set of essential qualities, it treats gender as an ongoing process and a set of relationships, which are differentially empowered (Kraack 1999). The framework has also been useful in this research in that it gives significance to, "the historically constructed social context as well as the everyday life" (*ibid*: 155) of the Maasai. The concept of hegemonic masculinity also make clear that treating men as a single category hides the contested nature of gender identities and the variety of differences that exist within the category 'men' (Connell 1995, Cornwall 2000). In my analysis, this has been confirmed through the identification of the differential impacts of development on men. The thesis also confirms that gender (and masculinity) is not fixed but is relational, unstable and at times contradictory.

## **10.6 Policy suggestions**

One of the things that this research has established is that ideas, values, as well as social and institutional practices that affirm gender inequalities still hold currency, despite the political and constitutional endorsements. We have also noted that although identity is a matter of choice for Maasai men (pointing to their agency), these choices are played out in socio-economic and historical contexts, often beyond their control. Indeed, it is clear that men's 'patriarchal dividend' is mediated by economic class, social status, race, ethnicity, sexuality and age. Indeed, despite the dividend, most men remain disempowered in relation to the elite (composed of both men and women) that wield political and economic power. Development has widened class divisions and exacerbated poverty. There is therefore need for dealing with injustices that socially and economically marginalize men and indeed women by coming up with effective ways of reducing inequalities and promoting growth thus improving wellbeing. The point here is that changes in gender relations have also to be tackled through challenging other kinds of power relations not simply gender. Thus working with gender relations should also, as Sarah White (1997: 21) puts it: "bring out rather than obscure broader issues of inequalities among men, as well as between the sexes".

In connection to this, this research has shown that the contemporary alienation of Maasai land in Kenya began during the colonial period and has been reinforced since the country attained independence in 1963. We have also seen that the colonial state's alleged mission of 'civilizing' the Maasai, presumably for the better was little more than an excuse to justify the exploitation of their resources. The independent state's development policies and practices have not helped much in salvaging the Maasai from this exploitation and instead have been implicated in the continued exploitation. We have for instance noted that the independent Kenya government facilitated the manipulation by the wealthy and influential (elite predation of land) that has resulted in the further marginalization of many Maasai and mirrors the racial predation of white settlers during colonialism. Thus the Maasai have continued to lose their land resources since early colonial days to the present day so that Maasailand in Kenya today is characterised by extreme unequal distribution. We have established that this alienation of



the best pastureland has continued to seriously undermine traditional spatial production strategies as it restricted their mobility, flexibility and access to key resources. This has continued to undermine the material foundations of the pastoral economy.

The thesis then calls for the re-evaluation and re-examination of Kenya's land use policies and practices. It also calls for the redressing of the historical and contemporary injustices that have led to the Maasai losing much of their dry season pastureland. Indeed, in the recent past, the Maasai have put up a spirited campaign to agitate for redress for what they feel are historical injustices committed by the colonial and independent Kenyan governments pertaining to the loss of their land. This started with the street demonstrations in late 2004 in various towns and cities in Kenya. However both the British and the Kenyan governments have not responded to these efforts and indeed, the Kenyan government has continued to suppress the efforts through the use of force. This is in itself not surprising in that many elites in the government own vast tracts of this former Maasai land, some of which is for speculative purposes. This thesis identifies with these struggles. What we are urging here is that to begin with, these injustices need to be acknowledged and an amicable dialogue created to sort them out, a kind of a round-table discussion where these grievances are aired and resolved.

Maasai 'traditional/indigenous' alcohol should also be legalised as a step toward recognizing 'local knowledge' which since colonial times has been denigrated. At the same time, it is hoped, this would reduce the exploitation by global capital in the manufacture and sale of alcohol in Kenya by generating income to a wider spectrum of people. There is no reason why such indigenous brews should continue to be proscribed in the name of 'development' that, as we have seen, has not been much of a success for the Maasai. Kenya should take cue from the neighbouring states of Tanzania and Uganda where such indigenous brews have never been proscribed. Indeed, Kenya cannot claim to be more 'developed' than its two counterparts on account of its archaic alcohol policies. At another level, to deal with the problem of alcohol

and drug abuse, the people must also remain informed. A good place to start would be more honest advertising. The point here is that profitability should go with responsibility. There is also need to incorporate mainstream and alternative media and religious organisations in sensitising people against drug abuse. Anti-drug abuse and counselling lessons could also be introduced in school curricula. There is need to curb the exploitation of the Maasai *askari wa usiku* (guards) by enforcing the compliance with the minimum wage and improvement of the working conditions.

As White (1998) notes, “trying to bring about a change in gender relations constitutes a cultural offensive and also an economic one” (cited in Bujral 2002: 213). As such, this thesis also thus concludes with pointers to the need for social policy to assist in creating space for new masculinities and more egalitarian and cooperative relations between and among men and women. As Connell (1995: 86) points out, “Men too can make political choices for a new world of gender relations”. Toward this end and as, Cleaver (2002) also suggests, this should entail developing positive role models for boys and men by influencing mass media images, establishing activities in schools, NGOs, religious and youth groups where identities are being forged. Indeed, the theoretical insight that gender and thus masculinities are constructed or (performative as Judith Butler (1990) would have it) means that there is room for change in attitude, and therefore performance, and that biological sexes or differences should not be the determining factor for lack of equity, equality and fairness in households and in the wider community. Along this line, I am for instance of the view that there are some aspects of ‘traditions’ that can and should be discarded. An example is gender violence that is mainly directed at women. This points to the need for social policy for assisting in creating space for new familial masculinities and more egalitarian and cooperative relations between men and women. Such projects have been seen to produce some positive results such as in Nicaragua, Zambia and Vietnam (Chant and Gutmann 2002). In general we are calling for programmes that work with men to deal with masculinities as risk factors such as in the areas of alcoholism, violence and risky sexual behaviour.

## 10.7 Suggestions for future research

This thesis points to several avenues for further research. To begin with, there is need for more research that grounds the material and discursive legacies of colonialism on the lived experiences of the people of Africa. This is because as we have seen, unlike other places such as India, efforts to recover the marginalized voices of the subaltern have been minimal in the African context (Ahluwalia 2001, Ahluwalia and Zegeye 2003). This would serve as complementing the current research and bear the potential of enriching the postcolonial debate. As we have also seen, postcolonialism has been accused of concentrating too much on textual/discourse analysis and neglecting the material aspects and indeed, poverty among the millions in the former colonies.

In the same token, the present approaches to development such as PRSPs, NEPAD, The Commission for Africa and efforts by activists such as those in the 'make poverty history' campaigns, should be subjected to critical analysis using the insights from postcolonialism. Above all, the much publicised Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) should be thoroughly subjected to such an analysis. The point here is that these 'new' approaches should be analysed to establish how and indeed whether the approaches denote or represent radical shifts from previous approaches to development which, as we have found have by and large failed to achieve their stated objectives (especially that of reducing poverty). The power dynamics between the 'North' and 'South' that underpin these approaches to development should be of particular interest to postcolonial and indeed other researcher interested in plight of the marginalized 'South'.

How the intended beneficiaries of, for instance the MDGs are co-opted in the conceptualisation, planning, implementation, evaluation and indeed, any other facet of these goals should be a subject of thorough analysis. The aim should be to evaluate whether or

probably how much these 'development' efforts are another round of the 'civilizing mission' that has only been clothed in new robes. The point here is not to just 'throw out the baby with the bath water', as it were, but rather we should be eternally vigilant given the experiences of the past, especially in Africa that has historically resulted in unequal and exploitative power relations with the 'north'. Indeed, Africa has had a long experience with the 'civilizing mission' that has resulted in some of the worst atrocities committed in human history ranging from the brutal trans-Atlantic slave trade, through atrocities committed during apartheid regime in South Africa and the massacres and horrid incarcerations committed by British colonial forces during Kenya's fight for freedom from colonial exploitation in the 1950s. The point is that the power relations underpinning these development efforts should be analysed and made visible to avoid history repeating itself and possibly reinforce any positive aspects of these efforts.

More specifically in the area of gender, we may note that one of the major goals in the MDGs is to enhance gender equality. Given the findings in this study, it would be worthwhile to investigate how efforts geared toward this end are conceptualised. This is because most development efforts in the past have largely taken gender to be synonymous with the experiences and concerns for and of women. As this and other studies have indicated, men and masculinities should be part and parcel of gender issues and this should be seen as complementary to the concerns of women. Along the same lines and in the spirit of pro-feminist theorising of masculinities and indeed, gender, there is need to carry out research on the gender socialization of boys and girls focusing on educational and religious institutions, home, peers, policies and practices and so on. This would give us insights of how for instance boys are socialised and internalise stereotypical identities that in their future lives result in, for instance, violence against women and indeed, how some women are socialised to accept such violence as 'normal'. As we have seen in this research the 'modernization' of these agents of socialisation has had some influence on gender relations. Hopefully, research along these

lines would come up with policy suggestions on how boys and girls would be socialised to take more egalitarian approaches to gender socialisation. In the same direction, two innovative and pioneering efforts in Kenya in the recent past should be studied to identify challenges and opportunities and thus hopefully learn lessons that could be applied more widely. The first one is the newly formed group 'Men for Gender Equality' which has been sensitising the public on the need to change attitudes that lead to domestic violence. The other is a project initiated in Kambiti area of central Kenya that targeted domestic violence using ICT (Thuo 2005). It would for instance be interesting to know how they are theorising men and indeed, masculinities. Are they also for instance considering the wider contexts of domestic violence to include the material and discursive legacies of colonialism?

My study on men and masculinities utilizing postcolonial perspectives is a relatively new field. There is therefore need to carry out similar studies in other 'third world' countries that were under colonial rule where the legacies of colonialism are still being felt. I am suggesting something that parallels and builds on postcolonial feminism since, as we have seen, utilizing western models to study the 'crisis of masculinities' must take on board issues and concerns of the impact of colonial and neo-colonial relations between the 'North' and 'South. These relations as has been noted, are characterised by unequal power and exploitation and the theorisation of masculinities.

Methodologically, efforts that have been initiated by for instance Raghuram and Madge (in press) and Jack and Westwood (in press) on postcolonial methodologies should be reinforced by more studies along the same lines. This would enhance the relationship between theory and practice so that postcolonial theoretical approaches would connect more with the everyday lives and lived experiences of alterity. Ultimately, in the context of this thesis, this could result in more established 'postcolonial methodologies for the study of masculinities', which could, by implication, strengthen postcolonialism.

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## **Appendices**

### **Appendix 1: Questionnaire for Household Heads**

I am a Post-graduate student in The Geography of Department, University of Leicester, and undertaking a research on the effects of modernization on the Maasai people. I kindly request you to provide me with information by responding to the questionnaire below. The information you provide will only be used for academic purposes and will be treated with strict confidence. Your co-operation will be highly appreciated.

#### **Background**

1. Sex: (i) Male (ii) Female
2. Age Group: (i) 16-24 (ii) 25-34 (iii) 35-49 (iv) 50-64 (v) 65+
3. Marital Status: (i) married (ii) single (iii) widowed (iv) divorced
4. Religion: (i) Christian (ii) Muslim (iii) Traditionist (iv) Others (specify).....
5. Size of the family .....
- a. Adults.....
- b. Children (i) 0-5 years....  
(ii) 6-10 years...  
(iii) 11-15 years ...
- c. Dependants (i) Adults.....  
(ii) Children...
6. Educational achievement: (i) Not gone to school (ii) Primary education (iii) Secondary education (iv) Tertiary education.

#### **Land**

7. Present size of land in acres: (i) Less than 1 acres (ii) 1-5 acres (iii) 6-10 acres (iv) 11-20 acres (v) 21-50 acres (vi) 51-100 acres (vi) 100 and above.

8. (a) Have you ever sold part of your land? (i) Yes (ii) No

(b) If yes, who made the decision and what was the reason(s) for selling?.....

8. Who do you think should inherit land in the family? (i) Men (ii) Women (iii) Others (specify)

10. (a) Do you know of anybody who has passed on land to daughters? (i) Yes (ii) No

(b) If yes, is it a common practice/(i) Yes (ii) No

## **Housing**

11. (a) Type of House; (i) Temporally

(ii) Semi-permanent

(iii) Permanent

(b) Who constructed the house? (i) Wife

(ii) Husband

(iii) Both wife and husband

(iv) Others (specify) .....

12. What is your idea of a decent house?

(i) Typical/traditional house

(ii) 'Stone' house

(iii) Ironsheet-roofed house

(iv) Other (specify).....



## **Appendix 2: Example of checklist for unstructured Interviews (qualitative method)**

1. Would you consider yourself to belong to the age-set of a:
  - (i) Junior Moran
  - (ii) Senior Moran
  - (iii) Junior elder
  - (iv) Senior elder
2. What would you consider to be your: (i) Main duties?.....
  - (ii) Other duties.....
3. What are the problems that you encounter in executing your duties?
4. What would you consider to be the duties of;
  - (i) Young boys [Probe: attending school, herding]
  - (ii) Junior Moran [Probe: going to school, herding, working/employment, protecting people and livestock, bringing-up family]
  - (iii) Senior *moran* [Probe: bringing-up family, working/ employment, herding]
  - (iv) Junior elder [Probe: bringing-up family, herding, decision making in the family]
  - (v) Senior elder [Probe: decision-making, bringing –up family, herding]
5. In your view, what are the characteristics of a rich man?  
[Probe: land, family size, livestock]
6. What are the characteristics of an ideal man, *Mwanaume*? i.e. markers of manliness.  
[Probe: wealth (livestock, land etc), size of family, bravery, education, looks, type of work etc]
7. How do men help in the in the house?  
[Probe: cooking, cleaning the house, clothes and utensils, fetching water and firewood,

looking after children, non of these]

8. What are the characteristics of a bad man? [Probe: wife-beater, overdrinking, promiscuous, lazy, thief, corrupt]
9. What is your view of wife/husband beating?
10. Are there differences between young men of today and those of your time?
  - (a) If yes what are the differences? [Probe: *moranism*, education, drinking, religion, disrespect]
  - (b) What are the causes of such differences?  
What do you think can be done to remedy the situation?
11. What are the things that you would want to achieve/have in life? [Probe: job, land, house, wife, car, education, respect, long life]
12. What are the things that you would want your children to have/achieve in life? [Probe: education, house, land, livestock, job, cultivation]
13. What are the most important people in your life? [Probe: Father, mother, daughters, sons, grand parents, wife, age-mates, friends]
14. What are men doing to cope with poverty? [Probe: business, employment, promiscuity, crop cultivation]
15. What are women doing to cope with poverty [Probe; cultivation, employment, business, prostitution]
16. What do you think is the difference between urban and rural Maasai men? [Probe: dressing, language, occupation].