POWER, INFLUENCE AND THE POLITICAL PROCESS AMONG *ILOITAI* MAASAI

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ABSTRACT

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This thesis is based on fieldwork amongst *IlOitai* Maasai of Kenya. It examines political processes through the techniques and strategies that people use in order to achieve desired ends. I discuss the theoretical literature on politics and political process, in relation to the use of rhetoric, ideology and the significance of classificatory systems. A discussion of *IlOitai* pastoralism and social structure provides a framework for the analysis of the political process.

The use of power, authority and influence is the main focus of the thesis. I discuss power in relation to control over resources, the functioning of the age-sets and the interrelationship between the Maasai and government. I conclude that influence is the preferred technique by which people reach agreement. A discussion of influence shows it to be a pervasive factor in Maasai interpersonal relationships and in dealings with age-sets, as well as in the functioning of deputations and in ritual.

Political competence involves the acquisition of appropriate behavioural patterns in childhood. In adult life, negative emotional reactions are disruptive to social interaction and are actively discouraged. On the other hand people respect rhetorical ability. I also relate the nature of the political process to the pastoral strategies the Maasai employ. I suggest that women focus attention on the day-to-day demands of pastoral subsistence while men deal with the long-term needs. I therefore posit that a complementary model for the role of women and men is more appropriate for the Maasai than the previously accepted one of women being subordinate to men.

In conclusion I suggest that the Maasai use ideology in order to manipulate meaning for political purposes, regardless of gender or status; and that the political style of the Maasai is based on influence, rather than power or authority.

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DECLARATION

No part of the material contained in this thesis has been submitted elsewhere for publication or as a requirement for a degree at any University or other institution. The research upon which the thesis is based is the sole work of the author.

STATEMENT OF COPYRIGHT

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ORTHOGRAPHY AND ANTHROPOLOGICAL TERMS

Orthography

Maa is the term used by most authors for the language of the Maasai (e.g. Jacobs 1975; Mol n.d.). *IlOitai* people refer to their language as '*Enkutuk oo lMaasai*' which literally means 'Mouth (or language) of the Maasai (people)'. However in this thesis, the common literary usage, Maa, has been adopted for the sake of simplicity and convenience.

Except where the anglicised version of a Maasai term has been used in the text (e.g. moran for *ilmurran*, manyata for *emanyata*, or laibon for *oloiboni*) the orthography adopted by Tucker and Ole Mpaayei (1955) has been used wherever possible. Proper names for places, where they are an anglicised version of Maasai or are in common usage, have not been italicised (e.g. Entasekera, Morijo), but place names only commonly used by the Maasai have been italicised (e.g. *Encore Emuny*, *Olpusimoru*). Fictitious names have been used for people from the Ilkerin area who are referred to in the text.

Maasai nouns consist of two parts: a gender prefix which acts as an article (*enk* of *enkang'*) followed by a nounal element (*ang'* of *enkang'*). Because English speakers would not normally double the article component to a foreign word and because the article and nounal element are rarely split in Maasai, the Maasai gender prefix has been maintained throughout the text and the English article has been dropped.

In order to assist the reader there is a glossary of Maa terms following the appendices. The first occurrence of each term in the text appears with a meaning for the word and in both singular and plural forms for nouns and adjectives.

Each researcher on the Maasai has provided their own list of names for the age-sets and age-groups. Differences occur partly because of some sectional variation but also because of the different names that are given to each group or set, at different stages of their development. In this thesis the most commonly heard names in the Ilkerin area have been used for each age-set and age-group. A list appears in Table A, which compares these terms with those used by two other authors: Llewelyn-Davies (1978: 219) and Spencer (1988: 26).

Present author	Llewelyn-Davies	Spencer	Age-group
IlKeekonkop+			+Right-hand group
*IRaantai**			*Left-hand group
IlKiseeya	IlKiseiyai	Ng'orisho+	+Right-hand group
IlDeregaiyani	IlTerekeyani	Meruturud	
IlNyang'gusi	IlNyankusi	Nyankusi	
IlTerito	IlTerito	Terito	
IlTareto			
IlTuati			

Table A Age-set names used by different authors. The list is in sequential order with the most recently circumcised group placed first.

Anthropological Terms

Some clarification should be given of the way in which I use the terms 'age-group', 'age-grade' and 'age-set' in this thesis. In the case of the terms 'age-set' and 'age-group' I follow the distinction made by Spencer (1988: 6) and Stewart (1977: 28-29). An age-group is a group of individuals who are initiated during the same period of time which, in the Maasai case, involves the members' entry into moranhood. At the end of their period as moran two successive age-groups are joined together through ritual to form an age-set, a transition that moves members from moranhood to elderhood. Consequently *IlKeekonkop*, *IRaantai* and *IlKiseeya* are age-groups, while *IlDeregaiyani*, *IlNyang'gusi*, *IlTerito*, *IlTareto* and *IlTuati* are age-sets.

An age-grade, on the other hand, is a stage through which the age-sets and age-groups pass. The significance of age-grades amongst the Maasai has been variously argued by a number of authors (Bernardi 1985; Jacobs 1965; Stewart 1977). While all age-sets effectively pass through a series of age-grades the usefulness of this label only holds when different age-grades are associated with specialised roles and are given a distinctive label. No such thing occurs for the Maasai.

It should be noted that each age-set has a ritual connection with the moran who enter the alternate age-set below that of their own. These are the firestick elders. Firestick elders are not in an age-grade because this is not a stage they pass through. While the relationship has greatest significance in the period of moranhood for the alternate age-set below, the

link between the two remains with the members for the rest of their lives. Being a firestick elder is therefore a status.

An age-grade should also not be confused with a life cycle stage. If the terms used to describe boys represented age-grades then the same would hold for the terms used to describe girls. As girls do not move into a series of age-sets following their initiation this cannot be the case. In one instance, however, they correspond with each other and are labelled with the same term. This is the period following circumcision when young men are 'warriors' and are labelled as *ilmurran*. I discuss these distinctions more fully in Chapter 3 of the thesis.

It should be noted that the use given here of the term age-group is at variance with that adopted by Spencer (1988: 6) who includes male life cycle stages which precede circumcision (and therefore initiation into an age-group) within the category of age-groups. The idea of age-groups is also implicit in the writings of Llewelyn-Davies (1978; 1981) and Talle (1987; 1988: 93-94) who both describe life cycle stages as age categories. If these terms were genuinely labels for age-groups then, just as for age-grades and age sets, it would not be possible to manipulate which category a person belonged to. This is not the case as I show. As a result I treat these terms as solely being life cycle stages.

It has been difficult to decide whether to use the term 'life cycle' or whether to use one of the more widely accepted alternatives found in the recent sociological literature, such as 'life course' or 'life trajectory'. While I accept the sociologists' argument that life cycle gives the impression of a cyclical sequence, which may have misleading connotations (cf. Bryman et al 1987), I felt that because categories are being discussed, rather than the progression through life of individuals, the idea of the life cycle remained a valid one in the current context. The terms 'life cycle' and 'life cycle stages' have therefore been used throughout this thesis.

For the sake of simplicity I have used the term 'circumcision' to describe the operation that both males and females undergo before their initiation. It should be noted, however, that the separate operations for males and females are not comparable and that 'circumcision' is really a misnomer in the case of the female operation. The male operation involves the cutting of the upper part of the foreskin and its partial removal while the female operation involves the excision of the clitoris and labia minora.

CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

The Maasai are one of the best known peoples of East Africa. They are pastoralists whose herds of cattle, sheep and goats are a common sight in southern Kenya and northern Tanzania. The image of the Maasai as carefree wanderers across the savannah plains of East Africa has captured the imagination of Europeans. They were first brought to the attention of European society in the late 1800s by the accounts of explorers and missionaries (Baumann 1894; Burton 1872; Chanler 1896; Fischer 1884; Krapf 1860; New 1873; Peters 1891; Thomson 1885; von Hohnel 1894; and also see Merker 1904). These accounts described the Maasai as an arrogant and warlike people who terrorised the East African hinterland. After the establishment of European administration in the area, the Maasai were described as being uncooperative and conservative, as well as warlike and arrogant (Cranworth 1919; Eliot 1905; Hinde & Hinde 1901; Hollis 1905; Routledge & Routledge 1910; Stigand 1913). These stereotypes of the Maasai have continued through to be the present (Anon. 1967, 1968a, 1968b, 1972; Archer 1963; Farson 1949; Hanley 1971; James 1939; Matheson 1985; wa Kuria 1985).[1] Glossy publications produced for the tourist market also perpetuate these images (e.g. Amin, Willets & Eames 1987; Ole Saitoti & Beckwith 1980: dust cover).

First-hand experience of the Maasai suggests that these stereotypes are misleading. Jacobs (1979), the first anthropologist to work with the Maasai, has argued against their warlike image. Other anthropologists have commented on the hospitality of the Maasai (Llewelyn-Davies 1978, 1981; Spencer 1988; Talle 1988). Living with the Maasai, I also experienced the contradictions between the stereotypes and the social reality. My experience showed the Maasai to be curious about the world around them and willing to innovate.

In *IlOitai* young men travel widely over the countryside, have often been to visit Nairobi and recognise that some features in the outside world

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[1]. It is noteworthy that more recently some authors have interpreted the 'conservatism' of the Maasai as a positive contribution to the preservation of East African wildlife. (A.B.C. 1992; Anon. 1977; Horgan 1989; Lindsay 1987; Western 1982a, 1982b). This apparent conservatism is therefore being reinterpreted by some as a positive aspect of Maasai social existence.

might be useful to them. Often the knowledge of innovations outside Maasailand also interests the elders. One example of this is the elders' interest in artificial insemination.

While I was in the field people often talked about ways in which they could improve their stock. They recognised that new blood increases the resistance to disease and drought in their animals. The people also recognised that cross-breeding their Zebu cattle with other strains or breeds was a practical way of maintaining the strength of the herds, while introducing new attributes. Cross-bred animals can maintain the hardiness of the native Zebu cattle while incorporating other positive attributes such as increased milk yields. But the limited trade that now exists in the south-western corner of Kenya no longer allows the Maasai to incorporate stock in their herds from the traditional trading areas. In the past these trading networks extended as far as Uganda and the Sudan in the north and into central Tanzania in the south. At the time of the fieldwork the main source of new blood for the Maasai was through the purchase of bulls from a development project. These pure-bred animals were less hardy than the Zebu cattle. They required specific herding patterns and increased the labour needs of a family. High rates of loss among these animals led to disenchantment amongst the Maasai who became disinterested in buying the Sahiwal bulls from the project (Knowles 1984).

Some men had been to Nairobi on a course about artificial insemination. They recognised that artificial insemination would allow them to incorporate the increased milk yields of the Sahiwal into their herds of Zebu cattle. In this way they could avoid the high mortality rates encountered with pure-bred Sahiwal bulls. But the development project provided only the one option, the selling of live cattle, as a way in which the Maasai could incorporate Sahiwal blood into their herds. The project ignored Maasai comments on the problems they had with Sahiwal cattle and would not establish an artificial insemination programme. As a result the Maasai were unable to try artificial insemination as a way of introducing new attributes to their herds. I have introduced the example here to show Maasai willingness to be innovative when they understand the potential of an idea. The contradiction between the image and the reality of Maasai existence therefore appears to lie with the image that others have of the Maasai, rather than with the Maasai themselves.

Knowles and Collett (1989) suggest that successive governments in East Africa have used a consistent set of stereotypes as the basis for administering the Maasai. Like the development project, these governments have attempted to impose solutions on what they define as Maasai 'problems'. These solutions have rarely if ever been accepted by the Maasai and their conservatism can be seen as a form of resistance to government power and authority. Thus Maasai resistance to central government authority is rather a strategy of protest by a subordinate group (cf. Fry 1976; Lan 1985), than a case of unco-operativeness or conservatism. But the Maasai have never really seen themselves as inferior (Knowles & Collett 1989) and do not accept others treating them as such. This is true for both interpersonal and intercommunal relations. Spencer (1988: 143-144, Case 30) cites an example where the elders made the decision to promote prematurely some moran to elderhood. The elders made the decision without consulting the moran and when the moran found out they objected to the decision. This shows that the Maasai resist any form of attempted control which uses power or authority.

Ideas of dominant and subordinate groups are common in many descriptions of Maasai society (Jacobs 1965; Llewelyn-Davies 1978, 1981; Spencer 1988). The reactions of the Maasai to external authority and attempts by other Maasai to impose solutions indicate that these models may not be particularly informative. Maasai views of politics are therefore of central concern in resolving the contradictions that exist between the stereotypes and the reality of Maasai social existence. This is the subject of the present thesis. I examine the political process here in terms of power, influence and authority and the differences that exist within and between social groupings. In order to be able to analyse the political process amongst the Maasai it is first necessary to look at the literature on politics.

1.1 Politics

Early anthropologists classified African political systems into three distinct types. These were: systems where political and kinship groups were co-terminous, such as the Kung San; systems based on balanced opposition between lineages, such as the Nuer; and systems with specialised political roles and an administrative structure, such as the Zulu (Fortes & Evans-Pritchard 1940; Middleton & Tait 1958). Many of the pastoral groups of East Africa do not fit into any of these three categories. They

lack specialised political roles, kin-based political units, and do not have lineages. But most of these groups do have age-sets and in the early literature these were treated as political institutions (e.g. Dyson-Hudson 1966; Huntingford 1953; Jacobs 1965; Lambert 1956). Lucy Mair adopted this approach in her book entitled *Primitive Government* (1962). Some people still accept the idea that age-sets are political institutions (e.g. Bernardi 1985) but there are others who question this (e.g. Baxter 1988; Baxter & Almagor 1978). They argue that because age-sets do not have direct control over resources that are essential for subsistence there is no basis for the exercise of political power and authority.

The early classificatory approach to political systems in Africa (Fortes & Evans-Pritchard 1940; Middleton & Tait 1958) falls into what Leach (1961: 2) has described as "butterfly collecting". One of the problems with this approach is that the types of political system can be expanded in number to account for every variation that is encountered. But setting up types and sub-types does not help one to understand the dynamics of the practice of politics in society. Leach (1961: 2) suggests that the use of an inductive process of analysis that attempts to extrapolate from the specific experience to generalisations is a more productive way of looking at anthropological data.

The transactionalist approach in anthropology partly comes out of Leach's critique of functional and structural-functional studies (e.g. Bailey 1969; Barth 1966; Southall 1965). This has led to politics being studied as political process rather than in terms of political institutions (e.g. Arens & Karp 1989a; Fardon 1985; Fogelson & Adams 1977; Swartz, Turner & Tuden 1966b; Swartz 1968). One of the problems with transactional studies of politics is the underlying assumption that people always act out of self-interest and aim to maximise profit (Kapferer 1976). Consequently there is the potential to treat political process in terms of behavioural types without considering the aptitude of the individual or the stereotypes and values characteristic of particular cultural traditions. Even in those examples where choice has been incorporated into the model this has usually been done by considering additional types of behaviour like "uncertainty" and "risk" (e.g. Heath 1976: 31). Thus it is just as easy to enter into an enterprise of 'butterfly collecting', where the types become sorts of behaviour rather than sorts of political system, as was the case with the typological approach to politics. When this occurs the transactional approach has the potential to negate its own purpose.

The studies in situational analysis undertaken by members of the Rhodes Livingstone Institute developed an alternative approach (e.g. Turner 1957; van Velsen 1964). In particular, Turner (1957: xvii) developed the concept of "social drama" as a way of describing political processes. Situational analysis provided a way of looking at the processes that occur in relatively unstructured societies. A crucial element of situational analysis was "the description of the way in which social relationships are manipulated to the personal advantage of individuals involved in them" (Mitchell 1964: xiii). But of central concern in situational analysis was the element of choice, a factor that has been less obvious in many transactional studies.

In both the transactional and processual views of politics the emphasis has been on how people try to manipulate situations to their own advantage. Out of these studies, and a structuralist approach to meaning, came the work on transactions and meanings (e.g. Cohen & Comaroff 1976; Gilsenan 1976; Hobart 1975; Paine 1976). Important in these analyses is the idea that the creation and manipulation of meaning is an integral part of the political process. Bourdieu (1977), in his *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, expands upon this approach by treating social life as strategic rather than as rule bound. For example, in his study of kinship, it is "'the social uses of kinship', rather than 'kinship rules'" (Jenkins 1992: 40) that have been his central concern. This approach is similar to that of both the transactionalists and the processualists. All are concerned with strategy, or how people resolve disputes and try to achieve desired ends. Where Bourdieu differs from many others is in his concern with political competence (1977; 1988).

Whilst political competence has been a concern of Bourdieu's it has also been a concern of some of the transactionalists. It is through the study of political oratory that they have approached this (e.g. Bailey 1981; Comaroff 1975; Paine 1981c). This interest in oratory and rhetoric comes out of a wider understanding of the idea of politics (Parkin 1984: 346). The literature on political oratory (e.g. Bloch 1975b; Paine 1981b) has recognised that people can use rhetoric as part of a political strategy in order to exercise influence or power over others. It has also been suggested that rhetorical competence may coincide with political success (Comaroff 1975; Firth 1975; Salmond 1975).

People can use rhetoric in order to implement a strategy. It may be as much a part of a strategy as are a variety of other factors, such as the timing and context within which the words are spoken. Paine (1981a, 1981c), for instance, recognises that positions, forms and content are all open to negotiation when rhetoric is being used. The constructive use of rhetoric is therefore about reacting to the position of others and negotiating meaning (i.e. agreed interpretations of events, relationships, etc.) (Firth 1975; Paine 1981c; Salmond 1975).

A further observation that arises out of the work on political oratory is that rhetoric often relies on influence, rather than power or authority, for its efficacy (Hobart 1975; Salmond 1975; Turton 1975). The distinctions drawn between the use of power, influence and authority by those working on political oratory are therefore useful tools to apply in the study of both rhetorical and political processes.

But a difficulty arises when one attempts to look at the political process in a society. This is because of the confusion that exists in the literature over the concepts of power, influence and authority (cf. Gilmore 1990). Amongst political scientists, for instance, many have treated power and influence as synonyms of each other (e.g. Dahl 1961; Hunter 1953; Polsby 1980; Wolfinger 1974). In other cases the two have been defined in relational terms. For example, Bachrach and Baratz (1963) defined power in terms of the application of sanctions, and influence in terms of the absence of sanctions; while Parsons (1963) correlated influence with positive sanctions and power with negative sanctions.

Others incorporate influence within the wider concept of power (e.g. Lasswell and Kaplan 1952; Partridge 1963; Wrong 1979). Lukes (1974), on the other hand, conceived of influence and power as overlapping with each other and having a common ground in those cases where sanctions are not involved and where there is no conflict of interests. White (1971; 1972) goes so far as to suggest that it is not possible to establish a definition of power that is universally applicable. Even Weber's (1947) definition of power covers what most would now consider as being both power and authority.[2]

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2. Weber (1947: 139) defines power as "the probability that one actor within a social relationship will be in the position to carry out his own will despite resistance, regardless of the basis on which this possibility rests".

Anthropologists have been no less prone to adding to this confusion. For example, power and influence are often treated as if they are the same (e.g. Collier 1974; Nelson 1973; Rosaldo 1974), as are authority and power (e.g. Asad 1970; Barth 1961; Fazel 1977; Hirschon 1984; Middleton & Tait 1958; Swartz, Turner & Tuden 1966a). Even when an author specifically bases an argument on one of these concepts there is still a tendency not to define the meaning of the term. This especially applies in discussions of influence (e.g. Dahl 1987; Langness 1977; Turton 1975) and authority (e.g. Middleton & Tait 1958). Part of the confusion that exists regarding these terms is their interconnectedness. For example, influence may only be a plausible possibility if it is backed up by power, as may also be the case in the use of authority (Bachrach & Baratz 1963; Bell 1975; Jacobs 1965).

Some of the disagreement in the literature over these concepts arises out of attempts to define them by combining intentionality with outcome (e.g. Bachrach and Baratz 1962, 1963, 1970; Boulding 1989; Dahl 1957, 1970; Gamson 1968; Lasswell and Kaplan 1952; Russell 1967).[3] One person who has separated these two factors is Bell (1975). As a result Bell is able to provide a precise definition that avoids confusion in the use of the terms.

Bell bases his distinction between power and influence on the idea of contingency rather than on the application of positive or negative sanctions. He applies the idea of contingency in relation to those involved in the political transaction. Thus power, he says, involves the idea of a 'first-person contingency'. By this he means that it is the communicator (the first-person or person A) who will be responsible for the change in state of the receiver of the message (the second-person, or person B). Thus power can involve either positive or negative sanctioning because in both cases, as Bell (1975: 23) puts it, there is "a declared intent to 'shift' the individual's value position either in the direction of *more* enjoyment of the value (promise) or of *less* (threat)" (original emphasis).

On the other hand, he defines influence as hinging on a 'third-person' contingency. Thus, in the case of influence, it will be some external person or thing which will cause the change in the state of the receiver of the

[3]. The one possible exception here (other than Bell) would appear to be Simons (1986: 22) who describes persuasion as "a form of influence that predisposes, but does not impose".

message. Here person A informs person B of the potential for a person or thing C to alter the state of person B. Influence therefore involves the communicator in acting as an adviser of potential change while power involves the communicator in being the source of the change. But one cannot assume that because influence is sanction free it occurs in a vacuum. "Contingencies of reinforcement" (Bell 1975: 25) may generate influence: that is, the use of influence may depend on the underlying possibility of the use of power or authority (cf. Jacobs 1965: 15).

Authority has a distinctive mood. The use of authority makes no reference to other possibilities. Authority involves a categorical statement which is not perceived as being open to negotiation. Here person A orders or commands person B to do something. Thus while power and influence back up the use of authority, authority removes the possibility of immediate choice on the part of the recipient. It is assumed that authority will "evoke automatic, predictable responses" (Bell 1975: 63). In this definition, whether this use conforms to Weber's (1947: 140) idea of authority as "the *legitimate* exercise of imperative control" (emphasis added) is irrelevant.[4] Here authority is defined not in terms of legitimacy but rather in terms of the method by which one person seeks to get another person to do as the first person wishes. There is no appeal to the 'rightness' of the act. Rather authority is a bald, categorical statement that the speaker perceives as not being open to question. The receiver of the message may view it quite differently. This is where confusion arises with the idea of legitimacy.[5]

Bell's definitions have several advantages. First, the definition of power does not conflict with those definitions that see resources as being the crucial element in power relationships. This means that there is no contradiction between Bell's definition and the Marxist view that the inequitable distribution of resources is the basis of power relationships. Second, the definition of influence does not contradict the implicit connections made in the literature between persuasion, manipulation and influence (e.g. Dubisch 1986; Lukes 1974; Parsons 1963). Whereas other

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4. Weber (1947: 140) specifically considers authority in terms of relationships between structural units where there is a sense of hierarchical ordering. He uses the idea of corporate groups to describe those who are subject to authority. This explains his concern with the idea of legitimacy as a defining feature of authority.

5. Bell (1975) summarises his argument regarding these three concepts using the following linguistic paradigms: power - "If you do X, I will do Y" (p. 21); influence - "If you do X, Y will happen" (p. 26) [Or: If you do X, you/he/she/etc. will do (feel, experience, etc.) Y] (pp. 25 & 26); and authority - "[You will] do X" (p. 37).

authors leave influence undefined, Bell provides a concise definition that allows for the recognition of influential forms of political action as being distinct from those based on power or authority. Thus Bell's definitions provide a basis for distinguishing between power and influence, as well as between power and authority. In order to reach a better understanding of the political process clear definitions are an important prerequisite.[6] I shall therefore use these definitions of power, authority and influence in the present thesis.

Before proceeding something more should be said about the anthropological literature on power (e.g. Arens & Karp 1989a; Fardon 1985; Fogelson & Adams 1977). Most analyses of power have taken a lineal approach, suggesting that power can only flow in one direction (e.g. Bonte 1981: Collier 1974; Harris & Young 1981; Meillassoux 1981; Ortner 1974; Rosaldo 1974). An exception to this view is the work of Foucault. Foucault (1980; 1982) sees power, in part, as relating to the way in which society conceptualises the social world. Consequently, rather than having power flowing down through a system, power derives from the ways in which things articulate with each other. This gives a very different view of power to that presented in Marxist analyses where power serves a repressive function. It suggests that power can be a positive force (Foucault 1980; 1982). As a consequence Foucault's work also provides a different perspective on ideology. He presents a view of ideology as involving more than the simple masking of reality.

Foucault's view of power also extends beyond ideas of maximisation of profit. One author likens Foucault's interpretation to that of a game of chess. In this analogy, while he describes winning a piece on the chessboard as "indeed a 'micro-power'", the power play also depends on "the effect of the overall arrangement of the pieces at the time as well as the strategy leading up to and including the capture" (Hoy 1986: 135). Thus, for Foucault, strategy is an important aspect of the exercising of power. With these observations in mind it is now time to look at politics and the political process in the Maasai context.

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6. It is interesting that Jacobs (1965: 14-16) also felt the need to distinguish between the ideas of power, force, influence and authority in his thesis on the Maasai. He did this using the definitions of Bachrach and Baratz (1963). But, in his analysis of Maasai politics and the age-set system, he makes little use of these distinctions.

1.2 Maasai Politics

The first study of Maasai politics undertaken by an anthropologist relied on a typological approach (Jacobs 1965). In this study Jacobs saw age-sets as the primary political institution in Maasai society. Others have continued to advance a similar argument (Bernardi 1985), despite the observations made on age-sets by Baxter and Almagor (1978).

Recent work on age-sets has implied a need for a more flexible approach to politics in such societies. Galaty (1983), however, has objected to a processual approach to politics amongst the Maasai. His central concern has been with the symbolic and ritual aspects of power amongst the Maasai. As a result he argues that it is the transformative capacity of ritual that is a potential source of power.

Another approach to Maasai politics, coming out of the work on age-sets, is the idea of age-sets acting as a gerontocracy. In a gerontocracy power lies in the hands of the older men. Spencer (1965) found this idea especially helpful in his study of the Samburu, a cognate group with the Maasai. Among the Samburu, who practise polygamy, older men control the marriage possibilities of the younger men and in this way wield power over them. In an early work on the Maasai, Spencer (1976) viewed the Maasai, who also practise polygamy, as being a gerontocracy. But following his fieldwork with *IlMatapato* Maasai he reached the conclusion that paternal control, rather than gerontocratic control by age-sets, underlay Maasai politics (cf. Llewelyn-Davies 1978; 1981; Talle 1988). In Spencer's (1988) analysis it is the interrelationships between the young men and the elders that are the locus of power.

Power relationships have also informed the studies on Maasai women (Llewelyn-Davies 1978, 1981; Talle 1987, 1988). The theoretical basis of this work is the Marxist model of social control. The studies have focused on the extent to which women have access to, and control over, resources. Llewelyn-Davies (1978, 1981), for example, believes that men have control over the women because they own and control the livestock. This view of power, emanating from control over resources, is also reflected in the work of Spencer and Jacobs who view elders as having control over both women and young men.

Related to ideas of control over resources and the exercise of power is a general concern with the division between the public and private domains in pastoral societies. Authors have generally accepted that men

occupy the public domain while women occupy a domestic one, especially in those pastoral societies that have age-sets (Asad 1970; Beck 1978; Dyson-Hudson 1966; Jacobs 1965; Gulliver 1955; Marx 1967; Spencer 1965). While some authors have questioned this simple division (Ensminger 1987; Klima 1964; Nelson 1973), many establish an implicit binary opposition between men and women, based on a public versus private split. In this scenario men wield power in the public forum while women wield influence in the private domain (e.g. Dahl 1987). This idea derives from the earlier work on politics where politics was conceived of as a public matter and not a private one (Swartz 1968; Swartz, Turner, Tuden 1966a). Several studies of pastoral societies have suggested that it is not possible to make such generalisations about the political position of women (e.g. Cunnison 1966; Oxby 1987; Tapper 1978; Watson-Franke 1987). But studies of the Maasai largely accept this view.

In the studies that discuss Maasai women, because women cannot own livestock the studies conclude that the women have no control. The argument goes that women are confined to the domestic sphere and are dominated by the men who wield power over them (Jacobs 1965; Llewelyn-Davies 1978, 1981; Spencer 1988). The ideology that expresses this division between men and women is one that says men have livestock while women have children (Llewelyn-Davies 1978). Anthropologists have largely accepted this ideological view and use it to support the idea that women are subordinate to men in Maasai society (but cf. Talle 1987, 1988).

Both Dahl (1987) and the Dyson-Hudsons (1980) have touched upon the need to consider the ideologies that underlie social organisation in each pastoral society studied. They argue that ideology often masks the reality of a situation. Dahl (1987) suggests that in pastoral societies ideology often undervalues the women's contribution to the pastoral endeavour, thus legitimising further the accepted authority of men and the male view. The Dyson-Hudsons (1980: 54) suggest that we look at both male and female views in relation to the contributions that the two groups make to the practice of pastoralism and that we distinguish between the "value systems" and the "production systems". In this way, they say, it will be possible to avoid confusion between "ideology and actual behaviour" (Dyson-Hudson & Dyson-Hudson 1980: 54).

But in the case of the Maasai both men and women express the ideology (Llewelyn-Davies 1978). Therefore it cannot be an assertion

used by men to subordinate women. Nor does the idea that men have cattle while women have children in Maasai society inherently suggest inequality between the sexes (cf. Chatty 1978; Dahl 1979). Rather, it suggests difference. The ideology, which expresses the splitting of people into distinct categories, is therefore a device used to suggest identity, rather than an expression of one group's domination over another.

In societies where there exists no recognisable political institutions, ordinary daily social practice grounds politics. In these societies there is the possibility of a correlation between particular political practices and the society's systems of classification. Thus the political will be "underpinned" by the creation and mediation of boundaries and by the interpretation of social behaviour and relationships (Cohen and Comaroff 1976: 102; and cf. Myers 1986). Where there are no political institutions one would therefore expect that distinctions in categorisation and the status of people would distinguish power relationships (cf. Balandier 1970).

There are two clear areas where this can be examined for people like the Maasai. This is within the age-set system and in the relationships that exist between women and men. La Fontaine (1978) has discussed these two forms of differentiation. She notes that they are distinctions founded in "human physiology" which differ in the bases of the underlying principles of the social distinctions: sexual differentiation is based on "the unity of conjoined opposites" while age-sets create "a hierarchy out of ordered divisions of the human life-span" (La Fontaine 1978: 18). She adds that both systems of categorisation "exercise direct constraints on human behaviour in that they present clusters of attributes which by association with the 'natural' origin of the differentiating structure are ascribed to individuals" (La Fontaine 1978: 18). They are therefore apt examples of social ascription on which to concentrate for a deeper understanding of politics amongst a group like the Maasai. It is around these two principles of categorisation that the analysis of the political process will focus.

In this thesis I argue that it is not possible to distinguish a clear asymmetry in the power relationships between men and women in Maasai society. One cannot therefore replace the idea of political institutions with a model of differentiation based on categorical or interpersonal power relationships. As a result it is only by looking at politics as process that it is possible to understand politics in Maasai society. Where politics is about process these processes can extend beyond the boundaries of the "groups

or fields" of society (Swartz, Turner and Tuden 1966a: 8). The groups or fields therefore simply provide the framework within which political activity takes place. In this thesis I introduce the structural aspects of Maasai society in order to provide a framework for understanding the processual aspects of social interaction. From this basis I then analyse the political process in Maasai society.

1.3 The Present Study

The approach adopted in this thesis is, then, one of looking at politics as political process. But I recognise that the ideology of the society informs the political process. The use of the term ideology here refers to the predispositions found in a society that provide a framework for the strategies people formulate. Strategies are therefore also an important component of the analysis. In the analysis I explicitly recognise that not every person has the same political competence: while everybody has the same habitus (Bourdieu 1977), some are more competent than others. I suggest that personal political competence is acquired through the socialisation process and derives from the social habitus.

In previous studies of politics as political process there has been no real attempt to look at the notion of political style. By political style I mean a set of repeated practices that people use as standard strategies in order to cope with actions that they perceive as being socially disruptive, such as disagreements, fights and disputes. In the descriptions given above of the transactions between the Maasai and the colonial government, and the Maasai and the development project, it seems that the colonial government and development project adopt an authoritarian style in their dealings with the Maasai. Some authors have also identified relationships of power and authority within Maasai society. My own experience amongst the Maasai led me to doubt the common use of these forms of political style. Instead, I suggest that, rather than a political style based on power or authority, the Maasai use a political style based on influence.

In Chapter 2 I discuss *IlOitai* pastoral practice in terms of the historical and ecological contexts. I describe the settlement in which I undertook fieldwork (called *enkang' empaash*) and both the daily and seasonal routines of *IlOitai* pastoralism. I suggest that the position of individuals within the life cycle determines the roles that they fulfil in the practice of pastoralism.

Chapter 3 focuses on the structure of *IlOitai* society and looks at the life cycle stages, the age-set system, marriage and kinship. These structural aspects form the basis for the discussion which follows on the nature of political practice in *IlOitai* society.

In Chapter 4 I look at the use of power in Maasai society. I argue that power is not exclusively in the hands of the elders. I consider the ideas of ownership and control and find that it is impossible to provide simple delineations of authority based on these ideas. Women, for example, have control over a number of resources and may withdraw their labour in order to achieve a specific purpose. I also consider power with regard to the workings of the age-set system. I find that influence rather than power is the basis upon which age-sets reach decisions. I also consider the nature and use of sanctions, as well as the nature of interactions between the Maasai and government. I conclude that in settling issues the Maasai prefer to negotiate an agreement, rather than to use forceful techniques of persuasion based on the use of power or authority.

Chapter 5 looks more closely at how people use influence both in the context of the home and in the wider society. I also consider the way in which groups of people use influence through a discussion of deputations (*ilamala*). In the final section of the chapter I consider the way in which influence is a factor in ritual and show that discussion and debate are as much a part of the successful completion of rituals as they are a part of normal daily social life.

Chapter 6 focuses on the ways in which the individual acquires political competence. The discussion begins by showing that the Maasai prefer to avoid emotional and social activities that disrupt social interaction. I discuss the ways in which children are socialised into using acceptable techniques and show how adults employ these techniques. The idea of rhetorical ability is also introduced and discussed in the light of acquiring political competence. I show that some individuals have rhetorical skills admired by others, regardless of their success or otherwise as pastoralists.

Chapter 7 relates the political process to pastoral strategies. I suggest that the concerns of women and men are distinctly different and are the source of the sexual differences labelled by others as defining a power relationship between men and women. To illustrate the differences between the concerns of women and men I compare the significance of taking lovers for women, and the significance of stock associates for men. I consider

these relationships in terms of the role of marriage and the family as a productive unit. I conclude that in order to reach a better understanding of Maasai society the distinctions between the sexes should be treated as complementing each other, rather than expressing a differential access to power.

In Chapter 8 I return to the argument that in order to understand politics amongst a group like the Maasai requires treating politics as process. I suggest that a transactional approach enables one to incorporate into a view of politics the private interactions and the public statements. In this process personal competence is as important in the successful exploitation of situations as is any prior position or status that one holds in society. I also conclude that influence is the culturally preferred political style of the Maasai.

Overall, I move from a general consideration of *IlOitai* pastoral practice and social structure to the specific consideration of power and influence in Maasai society. I discuss both the ways in which people are socialised into the appropriate behavioural patterns and the distinct ambitions of adult women and men. In this way I can relate the politics of the Maasai to their practice of pastoralism and also to the process of social reproduction.

CHAPTER TWO
ILOITAI PASTORALISM

The Maasai, who speak a common language (Maa), are largely semi-nomadic or transhumant pastoralists. They and their herds live in the savannah regions of present-day southern Kenya and northern Tanzania. The Maasai are divided into 16 or more sections (see Appendix 1) with each, until recently, holding a distinct geographical territory. But both the Masai Moves of this century and the decline in numbers of some sections have made this geographical separateness less distinct than it was.

Two distinctive groups occur amongst the Maasai: ritual experts, or *iloibonok* (sing. *oloiboni*), and blacksmiths, or *ilkunono* (sing. *olkunono*). Whilst still Maasai these groups are marked off from the rest of society in a number of ways (Galaty 1977, 1982). *Ilkunono* form an endogamous group with whom marriage was traditionally prohibited. The practices of this group meant that other Maasai treated them as "polluted" (Galaty 1982: 11). This system is now breaking down and Galaty (1977: 357) talks of *IlPurko* men marrying the daughters of *ilkunono*. *Iloibonok* form a distinct sub-clan called *oloonkidong'i* renowned as diviners and ritual experts. They marry exogamously with other Maasai and are therefore not polluting. Like *ilkunono, iloibonok* are not tied to particular sections. For example, the same ritual expert may divine for a number of different sections of the Maasai (Jacobs 1965). Whilst Galaty (1982: 10) describes both *ilkunono* and *iloibonok* as "occupational categories", they exist outside of the sections and their territorial divisions.

While each section is autonomous, the major ritual events that mark the opening and closing of recruitment to the age-sets involves a timing that is relative to the other sections.[1] The section called *IlKeekonyokie*, for example, are the first to open a new age-group circumcision period. They do this for all Maasai sections with the performance of the ceremony called *emowuo o lkiteng'* (lit. 'the horn of the ox') (Galaty & Lembuyia 1984). Likewise, the last major ceremony of the cycle, called either *olng'esher* (lit. 'the barbecue') or *enkang' oo lorikan* (lit. 'the village of the chairs'),

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[1]. Lists of the relevant Maasai rituals, and the sequence in which they occur, can be found in Spencer (1988: 57) and Voshaar (1979: 98).

depending on which section is performing it, is first performed by *IlKisonko* who live in Tanzania. This ceremony brings together the two previous age-groups into a new age-set and it is *IlKisonko* who give the name to this new age-set (Ole Sankan 1971: 35).

Ritual experts, or *iloibonok*, play a significant role in this cycle of age-set ceremonies as diviners of propitious times and places at which these ritual events can take place. No major ritual is undertaken before a delegation of people has approached a ritual expert with a gift, usually of several animals, in order to seek approval and advice for the planned ceremonial. The ritual expert also provides charms for these events. Different sections of the Maasai have different ritual experts to whom they defer on ceremonial matters.

At least some of the aspects of the rituals performed by the Maasai appear to vary by section. For example, Galaty and Lembuyia (1984: 2) describe the ceremony of *emowuo o lkiteng'* as being only celebrated by *IlKeekonyokie*. However Jacobs (1965: 259) implies that it is performed by all Maasai sections, but by *IlKeekonyokie* first. Spencer (1988: 157) describes the ceremony as preceding the sacrifice at *eunoto* for *IlMatapato*, *IlOodokilani* and *IlKaputiei* when the three sections held a combined *eunoto* in the 1890s. He adds that because of fighting between the moran the ceremony has now been dropped by *IlMatapato*. There is also a mention of *emowuo o lkiteng'* occurring before the first sacrifice at the 1949 *eunoto* for *IlKaputiei* (Holford-Walker 1949 - KNA DC/NRK 1/3/1). Content of rituals also seems to vary by section.

The internal arrangement of houses also suggests variation between the sections. From the data available, the relative positioning of the beds to each other, and the orientation of the house relative to the central area of *enkang'* (village; pl. *inkang'itie*) appears to vary by section (for example compare Fig. 2, in this thesis, as the usual *IlOitai* arrangement, with Arhem 1985: Fig. 2 as *IlKisonko* pattern and Spencer 1988: Map 2 as *IlMatapato* pattern).

Each section has a characteristic attire and accent and these identifiers are important in inter-personal contacts, especially in unfamiliar surroundings. One of the clearest markers between different sections of the Maasai is in the beadwork that people wear. Women in particular wear distinctive types of beadwork that others recognise as being specific to a particular section. For instance *IlOitai* women wear a necklace called

endebai (pl. *indeba*) that consists of beadwork worked on leather. While some other sections make similar necklaces, none work on leather and *IlOitai* use specific colour combinations.

IlOitai are one of the smaller Maasai sections. Although accurate census data are lacking, the total population of *IlOitai* probably numbers in the several thousand. Their territory spans the Tanzania and Kenya border (Map 1). Today they live in and around the Loita Hills (highest point of 7690 m) located 130 kilometres to the south west of Nairobi and extending over approximately 3,000 square kilometres. Administrative control in the area around the Loita Hills is still tenuous.[2] It is also one of the few remaining areas of Maasailand where the government have not subdivided the land into group ranches. However there was some attempt made by the Narok District Commissioner to change this situation in the early 1970s (Llewelyn-Davies 1976).

2.1 *IlOitai* History

IlOitai occupied the plains to the north and west of the Loita Hills, as well as the hills themselves, before the arrival of Europeans (Waller 1990). Once Europeans arrived a series of events occurred that have had a lasting impact on *IlOitai* and have caused the steady erosion of their territorial rights.

The first of these events was the rinderpest epidemic of 1891. The herds of *IlOitai* were decimated by the epidemic and the people raided their neighbours in an attempt to rebuild their herds. Raids and counter-raids continued for many years until in 1902 *IlPurko* defeated *IlOitai* in a battle called "the War of Morijo" (Jacobs 1965: 101-103; Waller 1976). The resultant retreat of *IlOitai* from the plains surrounding the Loita Hills saw the end of their access to large tracts of land. This was pasture that people had previously used as wet-season grazing.

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2. Spencer (1988: 3) suggests that *IlMatapato* "have probably had less close administration than any other tribal section". Having scrutinized the Kenya National Archives (KNA) for administrative material referring to *IlOitai* I would argue for a mutual neglect of both sections by succeeding governments. However this is not to deny the secondary impact of government decisions on *IlOitai* (see text) or the notoriety of *oloonkidong'i* sub-clan who now live in the Loita Hills.

British interest in the savannah lands held by the Maasai in the Rift Valley, both for farming and because of the building of the Uganda railway, led to two moves of the Maasai from their traditional lands in 1904 and 1913. The First Masai Move opened up land for settler farmers in the Rift Valley while the Second Masai Move opened up the area to the west of Mount Kenya for settler farming. Instrumental in these moves was *oloiboni* Olenana. The significance of Olenana arises from the colonial government's need for individuals who could transmit the desires of government to the people. Chiefs usually fulfilled this role in tribes that had an hierarchical political ordering. In the Maasai case the government chose to treat Olenana as a chief, when his real role was that of ritual expert.

The first of these moves, which followed the signing of a treaty between the British government and the Maasai, split the Maasai into two distinct territorial locations. This consisted of a northern reserve on the Laikipia Plains to the north and west of Mount Kenya and a southern reserve located south of the Uganda railway (Leys 1925: 106). The intention was to build a road wide enough for cattle to travel along to connect the two reserves. Government also agreed that the Maasai could congregate at Kinangop for ceremonial purposes. This first move had little impact on *IlOitai* although some *IlPurko* chose to move to an area near Narok rather than to the northern reserve. By 1909 2,000 *IlPurko* lived on the Loita Plains to the north of the Loita Hills (Waller 1990).

The second move, which came after the signing of a further treaty in 1911, relocated Maasai previously residing in the northern reserve in an enlarged southern reserve. The enlarged reserve extended further west and east along the Tanganyikan border than it had before (Leys 1925: 107). Olenana had remained in the southern reserve after the move of 1904. The colonial government claimed that the split had undermined his authority with the Maasai people. The government justified the second move therefore in terms of reuniting the tribe in order to establish easy administrative control.

This second move shifted the Maasai in the northern reserve back to south of the Uganda railway. Many of these people settled in Narok district. As a result, *IlPurko* now occupied most of the plains around the Loita Hills, especially to the west and north. But others also lived at Narosura, on the north eastern side of the Loita Hills (Sandford 1919: 195-

196). This major shift of *IlPurko* to the area around the Loita Hills caused *IlOitai* to lose large areas of wet-season grazing.

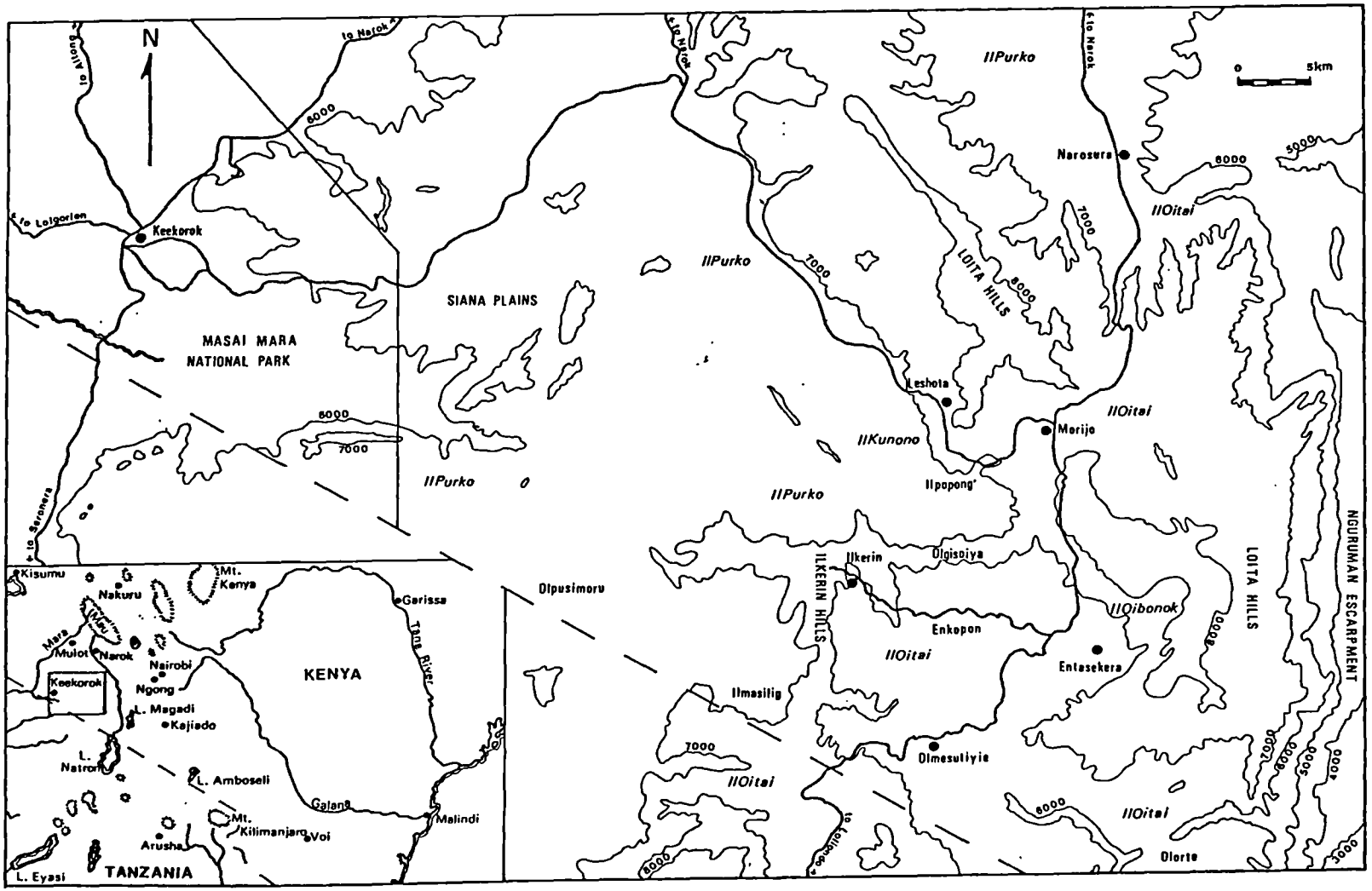
A period of stability ensued following the Second Masai Move when *IlPurko* infiltration of *IlOitai* territory, and the boundary between the two sections, remained reasonably static. But the gazetting of the Mara National Park in 1961 changed this. *IlPurko* had occupied the Park area after the Second Masai Move. With the formation of the Park *IlPurko* were excluded from a large part of the Mara Plains. As a result, *IlPurko* began to encroach on areas to the west of the Loita Hills that *IlOitai* used as wet season grazing. For example the area around *Olpusimoru* (Map 1), is now largely the preserve of *IlPurko* herds. *IlOitai* loss of these areas has curtailed the seasonal movement of their stock.

Although past government policies have had an impact on *IlOitai* pastoralism, attempts to develop *IlOitai* have not been very successful. In the 1930s the colonial government established a ghee factory at Morijo. This was one of three in the district, the other two being located at Kisogon and Ossinanday. It was opened in early May of 1938 and closed down at the end of July in the same year when it was found that the Maasai were providing insufficient milk for the scheme to be economically viable (KNA DC/NRK 2/6/1). The colonial government never tried another scheme of this nature in the Loita Hills.

The government established a primary school and dispensary in Morijo after the Second World War. Over the years more have opened and today there are several dispensaries and primary schools in the hills. By comparison the closest secondary school to Loita remains the government school in Narok (King 1972).

IlOitai participation in schooling is low. The children of other tribal groups located in the Loita Hills are often the main users of the schools (King 1972). For example, at Ilkerin the primary school population mainly consists of the children of workers at the development project. The development project employs a number of skilled workers who are either Luo, Kikuyu or educated Maasai. Also some of the people at Ilkerin are the children of Kikuyu/Maasai marriages. Those Maasai in the Ilkerin area who send their children to school are largely the families who are too poor to feed them adequately. The school provides a free lunch for these children and some families use this as a means to ensure their welfare.

Administrative control of the Ilkerin area is handled from



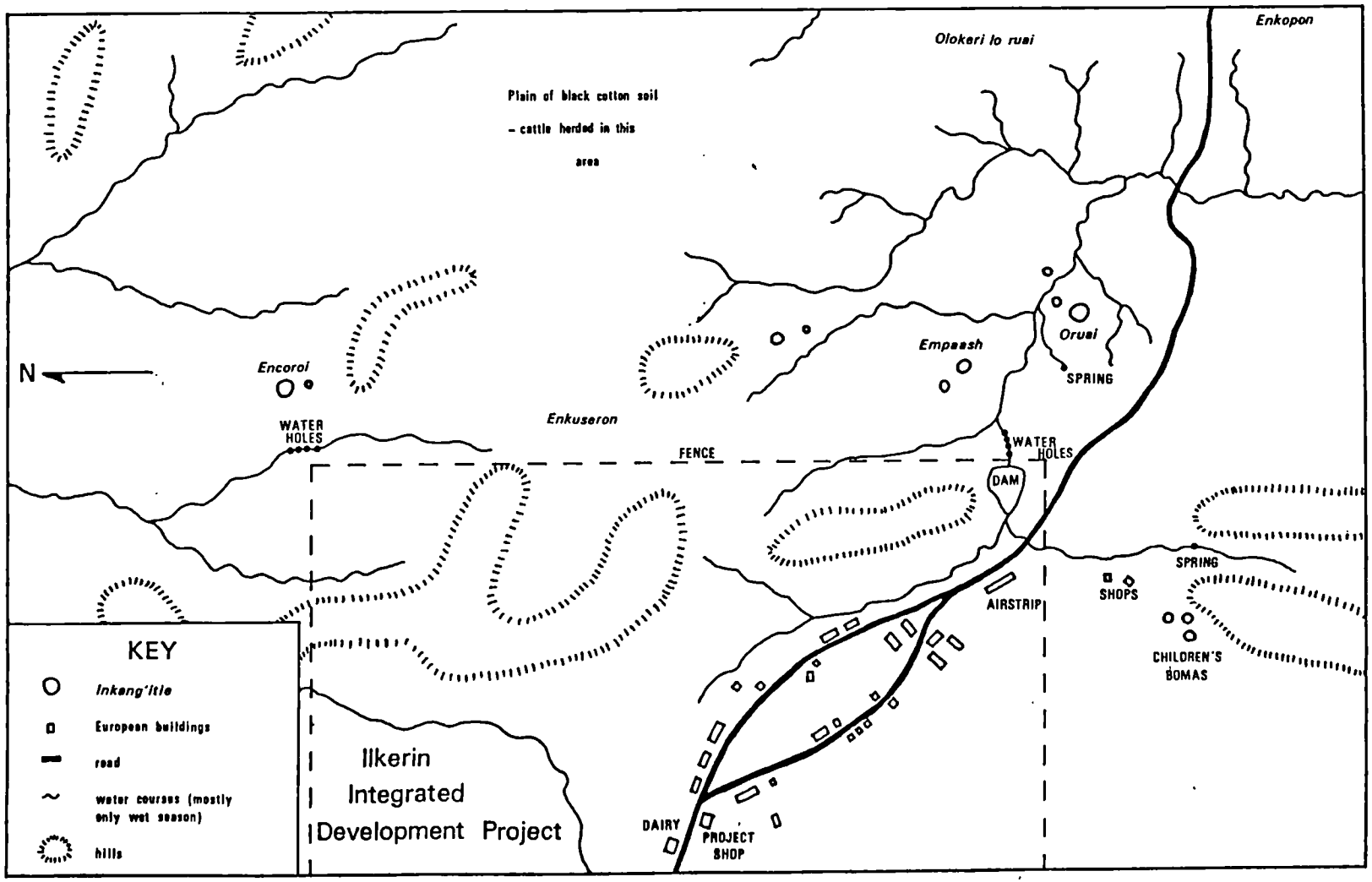
MAP 1: THE LOITA AREA OF KENYA

Entasekera where a police post and a government chief are located. The individuals who represent government authority are usually only seen at Ilkerin when he development project celebrates a special occasion. On such occasions the government chief usually gives a speech exhorting the people to develop themselves but the people take little notice of these attempts to make them change the way they live.

The most significant recent attempt at development in the area is the Ilkerin Integrated Development Project (Map 2). This was established in 1972. It is located 15 km to the west of the Loita Hills on the western edge of the Ilkerin hills (Map 1). The area is close to the 'border' between *IlOitai* and *IlPurko* and prior to 1972 *IlPurko* herds to the west of Ilkerin encroached into *IlOitai* territory. *IlOitai* accepted the location of the project because it provided a barrier to further *IlPurko* encroachment on their land.

The principal aim of the project is to improve the quality of Maasai livestock. The project has its own herds of Sahiwal cattle, Dorper sheep and Boran goats. But attempts to interest the local people in these breeds have been largely unsuccessful (Knowles 1984). In the case of Sahiwal cattle the programme has largely failed because the animals are not as hardy as the local stock. They require more frequent watering during the dry season than do the local Zebu cattle and this means that they have to be herded apart from the main herd. In turn the Sahiwal cattle's need to have frequent access to water means that they are unable to travel long distances to the best pastures with the main herd. As a result their condition is not as good as that of the Zebu cattle. Consequently they are susceptible to disease and injury.

The project also provides a number of facilities and opportunities for those living in the area. The most important facilities are the cattle dip, a primary school, a dispensary and the shop. For services like the dip and the dispensary there is a small charge for their use which the people are content to pay. The most important of these facilities is probably the cattle dip. People bring their herds from as far away as *Olmesutiyie*, *Olpusimoru* and Tanzania to the dip (Map 1). In these cases the men often keep the animals in a settlement near Ilkerin the night before taking them to the dip. They then return home on the following day, allowing the herd to feed on the journey.



MAP 2: SKETCH-MAP OF THE ILKERIN AREA

The shop also attracts a clientele from a wide area. In the early 1980s Tanzanian Maasai frequently bought major items, such as blankets and sacks of sugar, at Ilkerin because of shortages in Tanzania. Although there are other shops in the area many people prefer to buy at the project shop because it has a large stock and it is possible to buy in bulk. Many of the other shops are privately owned and undergo shortages. The owners are also unwilling to sell in bulk because it reduces their margins of profit.

The project provides only limited employment opportunities for the local people. Non-Maasai from elsewhere in Kenya hold most of the skilled positions at the development project. However, in 1982 a Maasai man from Entasekera replaced the then expatriate project manager. Some employment opportunities exist in positions as unskilled labour for the local people. For example, women can gain employment as piece workers at the project making beadwork while the men can work as labourers on building programmes or as night watchmen.

The project indirectly provides other economic opportunities. For example, the project is a venue for the informal selling of produce to project members. Thus, it is common for women to sell excess milk supplies to people who live and work on the project and men may slaughter a goat and sell the meat to project workers. Many of the women in the surrounding villages also brew beer in order to sell it to project employees.

The impact of the project on *IlOitai* mode of livelihood has been discussed elsewhere (Knowles 1984). In general, the Maasai from the surrounding areas, and as far away as Tanzania, use the resources at the project in order to enhance their pastoral existence. In the same way, the local Maasai often undertake employment at the project in order to rebuild herds after stock losses. But interest in the activities of the project is of an ephemeral nature and tends to focus around the special events, like open days, that the project occasionally holds. The people do not perceive the project as changing their way of life or developing them. Instead, they use its facilities for their own ends in their pursuit of a pastoral mode of livelihood.

2.2 The Ilkerin Area and Its Ecology

I carried out fieldwork in the Ilkerin Hills which lie west of the Loita Hills (Map 1). The average annual rainfall at Ilkerin (for the ten years

that records were available at the time of fieldwork) is 660 mm with a median of 685 mm. The area has a unimodal rainfall distribution with the highest rainfall occurring in April (Fig. 1). On the basis of these limited data, the area can be categorised as semi-arid and fits Bille and Heemstra's (1979: 20) climatic zone 2, sub-zone B. This is the same rainfall pattern found over the southern part of the Rift Valley and the whole of the Kajiado District. The only difference in this pattern is that Ilkerin's median rainfall is higher than for the other locations (Bille & Heemstra 1979).

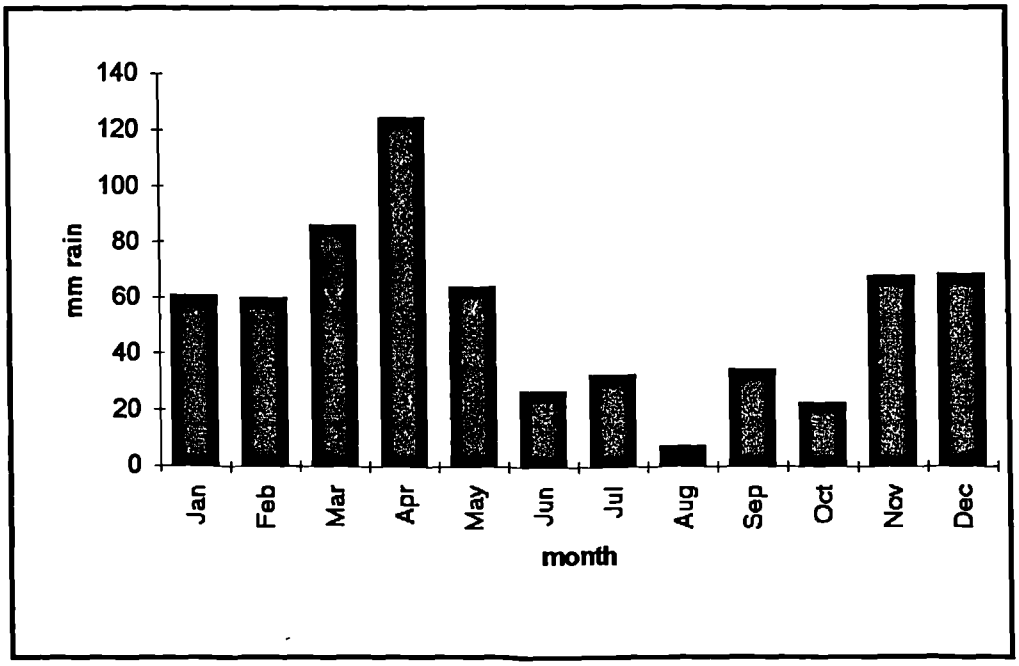


Fig. 1. Average monthly rainfall at Ilkerin.

The name, Ilkerin Hills, comes from the Maa *kerin* (sing. *keri*), meaning 'spotted'. This describes the dispersed tree cover found on the hills. The vegetation of the hills is typically an open savannah woodland dominated by *Acacia* spp. Other common tree species in this open woodland are: *Acokanthera schimperi* (*olmorijoi*; pl. *ilmorijo*); *Erythrina abyssinica* (*oloiboni*; pl. *iloibok*); *Euphorbia ingens* (*olpopong'i*; pl. *ilpopong'* - the candelabra tree); *Olea africana* (*oloirien*; pl. *iloirienito* - the wild olive); *Pappea capensis* (*oldimigomi*; pl. *ildimigom*); and *Rhus natalensis* (*olmisigiyioi*; pl. *ilmisigiyio*). The savannah woodland turns into a 'sweet' grassland at lower altitudes that can be grazed all year round. The dominant grass species are *Themeda triandra* and *Cynodon* spp. A specialised plant community, dominated by *Acacia drepanolobium* (*oruai*;

pl. *iruaa* - whistling thorn), occurs wherever there are black cotton soils. Dense vegetative cover fringes the streams and occasionally becomes a thick riparian woodland where the predominant species is *Acacia xanthophloea* (*olkiloriti*; pl. *ilkilorit* - the fever tree).

While the rainfall at Ilkerin is lower than that of the Loita Hills, this does not limit the amount of available grazing. Although Bille and Heemstra (1979) suggest that more than 50 mm of rainfall per month is necessary for plant growth, a green flush occurs at Ilkerin three days after 30 mm of rain, regardless of prior conditions (personal observation). Consequently, while rainfall for the months of June to October is low it is not unusual to have isolated heavy showers fall in this period that produce a flush. This sporadic rain makes an important contribution to the successful practice of pastoralism in the Ilkerin Hills.

In the past, the lack of permanent water sources limited the exploitation of the Ilkerin Hills for pastoralism. The fact that the Ilkerin Hills were traditionally used as wet season grazing by the inhabitants of the Loita Hills (practised in the lifetime of *IlTerito* age-set) reflects this. People would move from the higher Loita Hills onto the plains and lower Ilkerin Hills to follow local flushes in the wet season, and then retreat back into the hills in the dry season. In the 1950s some people established a permanent settlement in the Ilkerin Hills, close to a permanent spring. Another settlement followed this in the 1960s using the same spring for water. However no further permanent settlements existed until the establishment of the Ilkerin Integrated Development Project in the 1970s. The development project built two dams when it was founded. This increased the availability of water and provided the opportunity for the intensive use of the area by the Maasai. The impact of these dams has been profound. By 1982 the area had become a focus for new settlement and a total of 12 *inkang'itie* existed within easy walking distance of the project (Map 2; Table 1).

2.3 The Mode of Livelihood of *IlOitai*

IlOitai, like the other sections of the Maasai, base their subsistence on cattle. They also keep sheep, goats and donkeys, but in the Ilkerin area herds are dominated by cattle and goats. The local conditions are unsuitable for sheep and the people keep only sufficient animals for sacrifice in rituals. Donkeys are kept as pack animals.

Year	No. *Inkang'itie*	No. Houses	No. People	Source
1961	1	22	97	Air photo
1967	2	20	88	Air photo
1974	4	47	207	Air photo
1980	12	134	590	Own data

Table 1. Number of settlements in the Ilkerin area. Population estimated at 4.4 people per house.

Cattle are the most important stock: not only are they the source of *IlOitai* subsistence, but they are also central to *IlOitai* social relationships. Anyone who possesses cattle is automatically involved in various transactions that result in their owners both owing and being owed animals. If one does not own any cattle then it is more difficult to retain an effective network of social relations.

Mutual interdependence is characteristic of all aspects of *IlOitai* pastoral existence. Usually several households herd their animals together. Just as people perceive it as bad to have a single-family *enkang'*, called *elet* (Jacobs 1965: 222), a single family herding alone is also believed to be bad. Herding groups vary according to conditions and personal inclination and herding partners may come from any *enkang'* in the area. For example, the cattle of the settlement at *enkang' empaash* split into 3 to 4 herds from August 1981 to November 1982, with some of the herds containing animals from neighbouring *inkang'itie* (Table 2).

No.	Herding groups, August 1981	Herding groups, November 1982
1	A, K, +1*	A, +2
2	C, F, G, H	C, F, G, H
3	D, E, I, J, +1	D, E, +2
4		I, J, K

Table 2. Changes in the herding groups for *enkang' empaash* over 15 months. Letters indicate gate numbers in Figures 2 & 3. The family of gate B owns no animals of their own. (* numbers indicate gates not in *enkang' empaash*).

The composition of the herds varies by season (Table 3). The herds that vary the most are those which contain the unproductive animals and *intare* (small stock). When water and pasture are prevalent the herds split into groups that allow the larger and fitter animals to graze at greater distances from *enkang'*. This means that there are more herding groups during the wet season than the dry. In the wet season the older calves form their own herd and during the dry season they, plus the pregnant and sick animals, remain together with the sheep and the goats. The basic composition of the milch herd remains unchanged by season. This also is the part of the family's herd that travels the greatest distance to pasture each day. Regardless of season, the very young calves are tethered near *enkang'*.

Herd group	*olari* (wet season)	*olameyu* (dry season)	Distance
'Surplus' adult animals	bulls, oxen and cows taken to wet season grazing	non-lactating animals taken to relatives	Far
Basic productive herd	a bull, milch cows, calves and possibly donkeys*	a bull, milch cows and possibly donkeys*	
Maturing animals	older calves		Distance from *enkang'*
Small stock and stock requiring extra care	*intare* (goats and sheep)	older calves, pregnant cows, infertile cows, extra bulls, sheep and goats	
Very young cattle	very young calves (tethered near *enkang'*)	very young calves (tethered near *enkang'*)	Near

Table 3. Herding patterns for wet and dry seasons. (* donkeys are often left to their own devices during the day and not consciously put in a particular herd).

In the wet season families may drive some of the animals not required for the immediate needs of the family to temporary camps in localities where there has been heavy rain. These locations are usually on the plains surrounding the Loita Hills but may extend into northern Tanzania. Temporary camps are occupied for as long as there is pasture in the area, which can be anything from one to three months. This is different

to the practice of distributing small numbers of animals amongst relatives who live in other locations during the dry season. In the wet season the family does its own herding, while in the dry season the herding is done by the relative in whose care the animals are placed. This shifting of animals in the dry season creates a debt relationship, while involvement in temporary wet season camps does not.

Pastoralism involves all members of a household, with the position of an individual in the life cycle largely defining the specific tasks that are undertaken. For example, older boys and young unmarried men are largely responsible for the herding of the cattle, while the smaller stock are usually herded by the younger boys and the girls (see Appendix 2). Women are responsible for looking after the very young calves and sick animals tethered near *enkang'*. This involves both bringing water to the animals and making medicines for them to drink. Young sheep and goats are also the responsibility of the women who tether them inside the house or place them on the roof of a house during the day. Men are less concerned with the labour intensive aspects of herding except in the dry season. During the dry season the men control access to the water sources and may also go out herding with their sons.

Numbers of cattle in a family herd can vary from as few as one or two animals to as many as several hundred. In the Ilkerin area the norm is between 50 and 80 animals. The milk from the cows is the main source of subsistence for *IlOitai*. Goats are never milked and sheep are only milked to feed sick people (especially sick, pregnant women) and young children. The only way in which women process milk is by souring. Women do this when milk is plentiful or when they expect a husband home after a journey (in the same way that beer is brewed on such an occasion). Two methods are used to sour the milk. It may be shaken to curdle it or fresh milk may be added to milk that is already sour.

IlOitai traditionally traded with neighbouring agricultural groups like the Sonjo for millet as a supplement to their pastoral diet. But now people purchase flour from the shops, usually as maize meal, in order to make *ughali* (stiff maize porridge, like Italian *polenta*).[3]

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[3]. *Ughali* is actually a Swahili word that has been incorporated into Maa in the Ilkerin area. I have therefore used it throughout the text when talking of stiff maize meal porridge.

Some women in the Morijo area have begun to cultivate maize and other crops, a practice which Llewelyn-Davies (1978) dates to 1976. The success of their endeavours relies on two factors: first, the rainfall at Morijo is higher than at Ilkerin; and second, many of the women are Kikuyu or half Kikuyu/Maasai (with a Kikuyu mother and a Maasai father) and show more interest in agriculture than do Maasai women (cf. Richards 1939: 64).

The practice of fencing off small areas outside the gates (*enkurma*; pl. *inkurman*) and adjoining the main outer fence of *enkang'* is being adopted by some families in the Ilkerin area (Fig. 2). Men usually construct the fences and the women grow pumpkins, tomatoes, onions and some beans in these plots. Women pay little attention to these gardens, picking any produce that might grow when it is ripe. People make no attempt to store or sell the agricultural produce and the process of production remains haphazard.

The people occasionally eat meat from dead stock or wild animals and the girls or women may collect indigenous plants to cook as a relish to go with *ughali*. But the basic diet of *IlOitai* remains milk and flour cooked as *ughali*. This means that the people need money in order to buy carbohydrates, a demand that is of greatest importance in the dry season when many of the cows have stopped lactating. Today the carbohydrate content of *IlOitai* diet is supplied through maize meal and sugar that is bought from small stores or kiosks in the area. Women cook *ughali* or chappatis with the maize meal and add the sugar to tea.

People can acquire money in a number of ways. The project employs a number of people living in the area as either labourers or night watchmen, both of which require little skill and no formal training. All these employees are classed as casual labour and they can be sacked for minor misdemeanours; an occurrence that is not uncommon. Men who seek employment at the project do so either to supplement the family's income at a time when there are severe demands placed upon it (such as when a wife is pregnant, or there is a forthcoming ritual), or when a family has insufficient unproductive livestock to sell for the purchase of food. In the latter case the men may be individuals who have sold their animals to buy beer made by the women in the area. For those who are suffering genuine economic hardship the money from working at the project becomes a way to survive and this possibility has attracted some of the poorer, marginal *IlOitai* to the area. Women who work at the project (doing piece

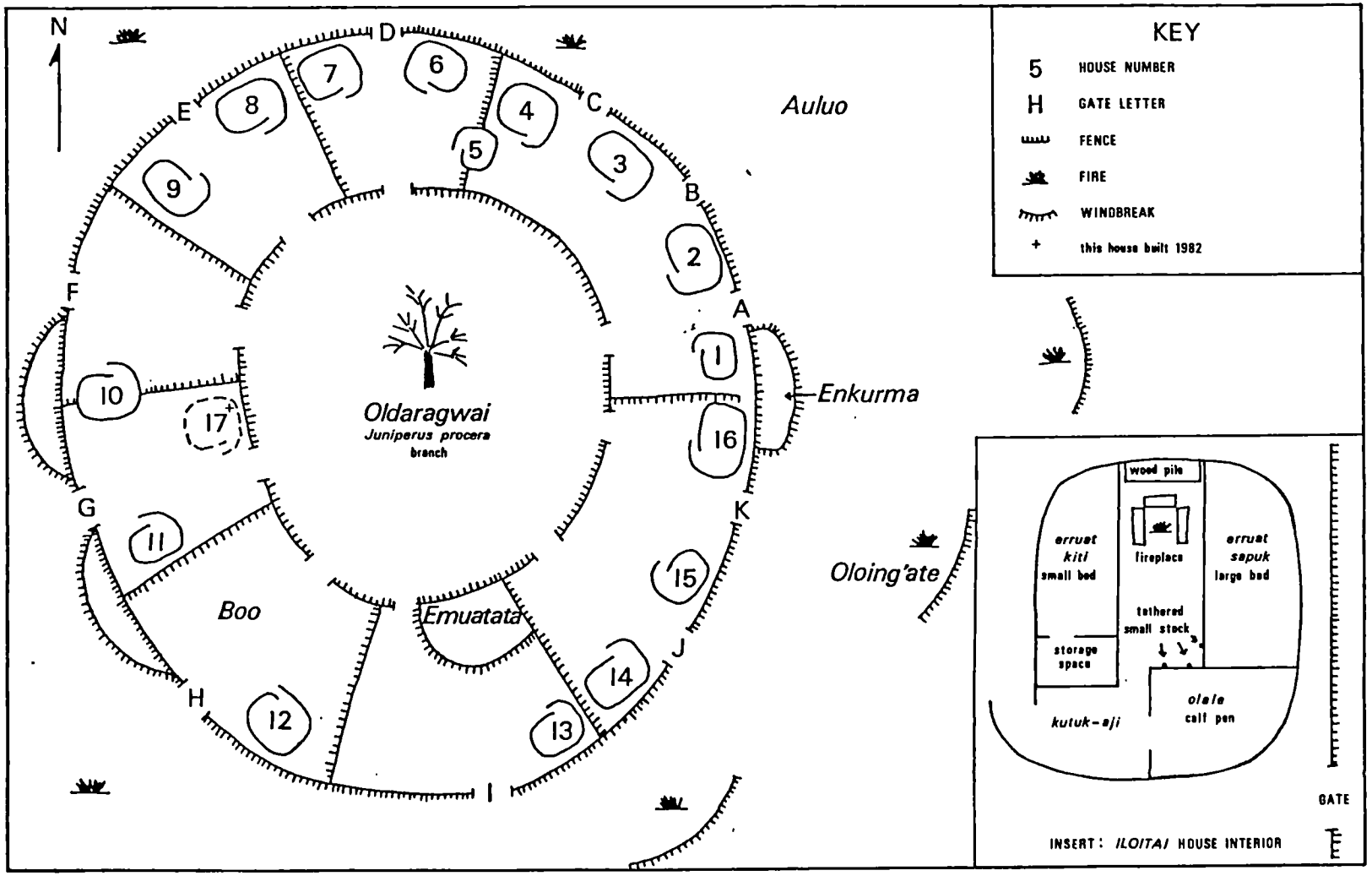

FIGURE 2: *ENKANG' EMPAASH* (1981)

work) also tend to be those whose heavy drinking habits or broken family ties have rendered them socially marginal.

Young unmarried men just out of moranhood often work at the project as a way of building up their herds quickly. They achieve this by investing all they earn in livestock. This is an option that young men, whose allotted herds have been diminished through a natural disaster or the bad management of a relative, find especially appealing. Earning money enables them to maintain their independence while at the same time restoring their herds.

Apart from wage labour there are a variety of other ways in which people can acquire money for basic necessities. In a small way the project has provided opportunities for the people that did not previously exist. I have already given the examples of men being able to slaughter a goat and sell the meat to the workers at the project and women being able to sell milk to the wives of the project workers. Women in the area will also sell milk at the project in order to buy sugar to brew beer, which in turn they sell to the men from the project.

By far the most significant source of income for *IlOitai* remains the sale of live animals at cattle markets of which *Encore Emuny* (Ngong) is the most important. Money from the sale of steers is not only reinvested in stock but is also the main source of money for major forms of expenditure. Expensive items of clothing, such as blankets and large sheets, and supplies for ritual events, such as maize flour and sugar, are bought with the proceeds from the sale of live animals.

2.4 *IlOitai* Settlement

I undertook fieldwork with the group of people who established the second permanent settlement at Ilkerin in the 1960s. The settlement, called *enkang' empaash*, had undergone three moves in the 1960s, each time moving only a short distance from its previous location (Map 2). Over the twenty year period a core group of households has remained in the settlements (Fig. 2 - Gates A, D, E, G, J) with other households moving in and out over time (Fig. 2 - Gates B, C, F, H, I, K). The following details are of *enkang' empaash* during fieldwork in 1981 and 1982 (Figs. 2 & 3).

IlOitai settlements in the Ilkerin area usually consist of an inner and outer fence with the houses located inside the outer fence on either side of

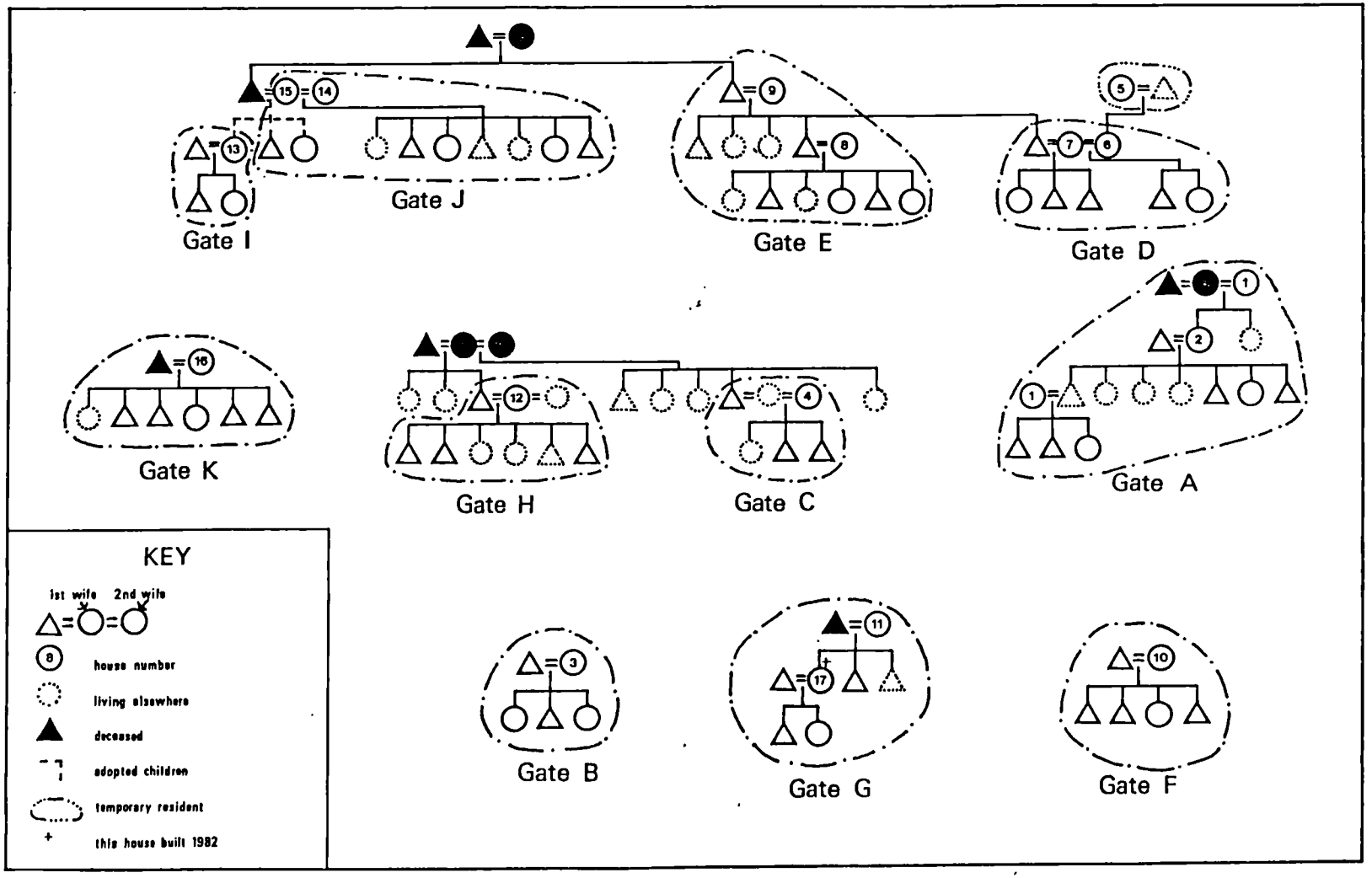

FIGURE 3: HOUSEHOLD UNITS OF *ENKANG' EMPAASH* (1981)

the cattle gates (Fig. 2). This creates a central enclosure which is a common feature of *inkang'itie*, but may not be found in those containing only a few houses. The central enclosure is where people keep the steers, some bulls and donkeys (the unproductive members of the herds) at night. It is also where animals from visiting herds are kept. Temporary stays of other herds from far away may occur when people take their animals to the dip or for inoculations at the development project.

The outer fence of *enkang'* is roughly circular. The entrances or gates are family specific and each marks an independent herding unit that may consist of one or more households in any of the following combinations: a man and his wives, co-wives whose husband has died, a man and his sons or a woman and a son. Dividing the inner space are a series of fences that radiate out from the inner fence creating a series of discrete units, each with its own entrance. These enclosures are where the lactating cows are kept at night.

IlOitai houses are sub-rectangular in shape with a flat roof. They consist of a framework of thin poles and are plastered with cow dung. Each woman who controls a milking herd usually has her own house. The exceptions are very old senile women who usually live with a daughter or a daughter-in-law, and newly-wed women who initially live with either a co-wife or their mother-in-law.

I have already mentioned that the internal arrangement of *IlOitai* houses is different from that of other sections of the Maasai (cf. Arhem 1985, Fig. 3 on *IlKisonko* and Spencer 1988, Map 2 on *IlMatapato*). The basic features inside a house are the same for each section and these are: *erruat kiti* (lit. 'the small bed', often referred to as 'the wife's bed' in the literature); *erruat sapuk* (lit. 'the big bed', often referred to as either 'the children's bed' or 'the father's bed' in the literature); a central area (called by some *oltiren* but in *IlOitai* usually not referred to by name) in which the fireplace (usually referred to as *enkima*, the word for fire) is located; a calf pen (*olale*; pl. *ilaleta*); and an entrance way (*kutuk-aji*, lit. 'mouth-house') (see Fig. 2, insert). Between sections differences occur in the arrangement of these features relative to each other. For example, in *IlOitai* the two beds are always opposite each other with the fireplace between them. This contrasts with both *IlKisonko* and *IlMatapato* houses where the two beds are placed next to each other on adjacent walls.

The orientation of the features inside a house relative to *enkang'* can also be different by section. For example, while in *IlMatapato* the woman's bed is oriented towards the centre of *enkang'* (Spencer 1988:, Map 2), as in *IlOitai*, in *IlKisonko* the woman's bed appears to be oriented in the opposite direction, facing the outer fence of *enkang'* (Arhem 1985, Fig. 3). In *IlOitai* the woman's bed is almost always on the wall facing into the centre of *enkang'* (with the calf pen the closest compartment to the gate) (Fig. 2, insert). Where this is not the case then the woman's bed faces towards the centre of the family's subdivision of *enkang'*. Where an elderly woman lives with a daughter or daughter-in-law the woman's bed is usually converted into two compartments, with one for each woman. By contrast, a new wife sleeps on the big bed of the house, sharing it with the children.

Calves are always kept inside the house at night. Very young calves may be tethered near the fire and older calves are kept in the calf pen. Sheep and goats are kept outside the house in specially built pens (*imuatat*; sing. *emuatata*). A woman may decide to add an additional pen next to the calf pen to accommodate some *intare* or, in a family where an old woman shares a gate with her son or son-in-law, the herd may be split so that all the calves go in one house's *olale*, leaving the other *olale* free for *intare*.

There is a core genealogical grouping in *enkang' empaash* based on agnatic ties (Figs. 2 & 3 - Houses 6, 7, 8, 9 and 13, 14, 15; Gates D, E and I, J respectively). Another grouping also exists based on the agnatic links of two half brothers living in *enkang'* (Houses 4 and 12, Gates C and H). Out of these agnatic links only one involves the presence of two full brothers (Fig. 3 - House 8 of Gate E, and Gate D). Jacobs (1965: 220) quotes the Maasai as saying that it is "better for kinsmen to live apart lest they quarrel over cattle". The example of the brothers of Gates D and E in *enkang' empaash* substantiates this. During the fieldwork an argument between these two brothers led to a split within the family and the brother of gate E left the area. I discuss this case in more detail in Chapter 6. Also of interest in this regard is the physical separation of agnatic groups found at *enkang' empaash* onto opposite sides of *enkang'* (Figs. 2 & 3 - Gates D & E versus Gates I & J; Gate C versus Gate H). This creates a physical split of each family into two distinct branches and may further support Jacobs' dictum that brothers should not live too close to each other.

Inkang'itie based on kin are uncommon in the Ilkerin area (cf. Spencer 1988: 12). There was only one example of a settlement based on

kinship in the immediate area. In this case four married sons, together with their father (*IlTareto* age-set), and their wives were the sole occupants of *enkang'*. The available evidence for *IlOitai* suggests that full brothers (*'king'ar olkina'*; lit. 'we share the breast') co-habit in the same *enkang'* only while their father remains alive and still holds some control over the herds. In the case of the two brothers mentioned above at *enkang' empaash* the father is very old and going senile. Thus, it is possible that his inability to mediate in the dispute between his sons contributed to the rift.

A particular age-set often dominated *inkang'itie* in the Ilkerin area. People may name such settlements by the dominant age-set present in them, e.g. *enkang' oo lDeregaiyani* (lit. 'the village of *IlDeregaiyani* age-set'). At *enkang' empaash* 6 of the 9 married men present are of *IlDeregaiyani* age-set (Gates B, C, E [House 8], F, H, I) and when House 17 was built in 1982 (using Gate G) this increased to 7 out of 10.

Thus at *enkang' empaash* there is a surviving core genealogical group based around Gates D, E, I and J (Fig. 3) and also a grouping of age-mates of *IlDeregaiyani* age-set. The genealogical core centres on the man who lives with his wife in House 9. The fact that the whole settlement may be referred to by his name, e.g. *'enkang' Ole* Nkipai' (lit. 'village of the son of Nkipai') reflects his position as the family head of a genealogical group at *enkang' empaash*. He is also the oldest person in *enkang'* and the only living member of *IlTareto* age-set. But the majority of the men in the rest of the households belong to *IlDeregaiyani*, the age-set of the youngest son of this man. The existing pattern at *enkang' empaash* suggests that moving to be with age-mates is probably more important than kinship links in establishing residence. This is not to deny that kinship can be an important factor in residence patterns, but rather to suggest that other factors are also at work in defining the relationships between members of a settlement and may prove to dominate the residence pattern.

Affinal links are also important in deciding where people live. In *enkang' empaash* there are, for instance, as many links through mother-daughter relationships as there are through fathers and sons (Fig. 2; Table 4). Affinal links may be used to determine residence patterns in two ways. First a daughter and her husband may move to where her mother lives or second, a mother may move to where a daughter lives. In the former case there are two examples in *enkang' empaash* (Houses 13 and 17). These are both instances where the mother's husband has long been dead. After some

years of being absent the next generation has then returned. There is one example at *enkang' empaash* of a woman moving to where her daughter lives (House 1). This occurred when the woman's husband died and because she had borne only daughters. In this case the woman moved to be near her eldest daughter.

House No.	Fa-So	Br-Br	Br-hBr	Mo-Da	Co-w	Co-w abs.	Age-set
1#	2*			2			*(IlTuati)*
2	1*			1			*IlTerito*
3							*IlDeregaiyani*
4			12			1st	*IlDeregaiyani*
5				6			*IlTerito*
6				5	7		*IlDeregaiyani*
7	9	8			6		*IlDeregaiyani*
8		7					*IlNyang'gusi*
9	7, 8	15					*IlTareto*
10							*IlDeregaiyani*
11				17			(Unknown)
12			4			2nd	*IlDeregaiyani*
13				14			*IlDeregaiyani*
14				13	15		*(IlTareto)*
15		9			14		*(IlTareto)*
16							(Unknown)
17				11			*IlDeregaiyani*

Table 4. Relationships between households in *enkang' empaash.* Bold numbers in the table refer to house numbers in Figs. 2 & 3. Age-set names in brackets indicate that the husband is dead. (# this house is shared by a grandmother and her grandson's wife; * the son is in paid employment and absent most of the time).

Enkang' empaash contains 6 households where there is no living husband (Houses 1, 5, 11, 14, 15 and 16). This is not surprising in a society where the 'gerontocratic' nature of the age-set system means that even a man's first wife will be several years younger than himself. Gough (1971: 109), for instance, notes a similar pattern for the Nuer where she

describes twenty of thirty-three adult women as having "no legal marital partners". The result of this phenomenon is that many of these women live relatively independent lives, without the same constraints placed upon their movements as those they would feel if their husbands were alive.

Another common feature in the Ilkerin area that may give women more independence than usual is the common practice of splitting up residential units so that co-wives live in different *inkang'itie*.[4] The reasons for splitting up a household unit vary. For example, an educated first wife may remain with her husband where he works while a younger wife may be left with the herd at the home of the man's mother. Sometimes an educated first wife will run a business (such as a shop) or be positioned near a school so that her children can attend it. Two cases of a wife settling near a school occur at *enkang' empaash*. In both cases the eldest son of the family attends the primary school on the Ilkerin project (Fig. 2, Houses 4 and 12).

Wives may also settle in different locations so that the herd can be split between two areas. This acts as a form of insurance against unforeseen disasters. In these cases the wives may live up to 20 km apart (e.g. as far apart as Ilkerin from *Olmesutiyie*, Morijo or Entasekera). When there is a drought or an outbreak of disease the animals can then be moved easily from one locality to another. This seems to be an increasingly common pattern and particularly prevalent amongst the age-set of *IlDeregaiyani*. In these cases the husband divides his time between the different localities where his wives live. Consequently the husband spends less time at a wife's home than he would do otherwise. As a result, a woman may spend a substantial amount of time effectively running the family's herd.

The strategy of splitting up a family and its herds is just one of a number of ways in which individuals increase their options in the pastoral economy. The bases upon which individuals live together in *inkang'itie* reflect this pattern. Jacobs (1965: 226-227) summarises the bases for moving into *enkang'* as relating to one or more of the following: exchange relationships, labour demands for herding, environmental factors, affinal kinship links and the status of an elder (i.e. living near a person who is rich

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4. This is a particularly common practice among those *IlOitai* men who have an educated first wife and who are themselves educated. Because most *IlOitai* women in the area have no education and educated men like having a first wife who is educated, this means that the first wife of these men is often, but not always, half Kikuyu. Many such wives come from the Nairrag Enkare area.

or respected). To these can be added the availability of other resources (such as schools, veterinary facilities, etc.); agnatic kinship links; and age-set affiliations. For a variety of reasons people therefore move from one settlement to another. This movement between *inkang'itie* has not disappeared with changing *IlOitai* patterns of pastoralism. The traditional form of movement in the area was one of transhumance based on seasonal variations in climate. This has largely now gone, but has been replaced with movement between established *inkang'itie* based on networks of associates. Thus the underlying principle of flexibility remains: it is only how people achieve this that has changed.

2.5 The Daily Routine

As with any pastoral community, the needs of the stock control the daily rhythm of activities. Individuals have to be constantly available to herd not only the stock, but also to milk them, take them to water, and to look after the special needs of young or sick animals.

The day can begin very early. Women often get up long before dawn to make *oloshoro* (a thin maize meal porridge) for the children who go herding. When the women have cooked *oloshoro* they usually go back to bed until dawn. At the break of dawn the women rise again, milk the cows and remove the sticks that have closed the cattle gate during the night. They then return to their houses and ensure that *ilcekuti* (herders; sing. *olcekut*) have eaten before they go herding.

During this time the men rise and take the milked cattle outside *enkang'*. Here they sit with the other men at *oloing'ate* (wind break; pl. *iloing'at*) watching the animals before *ilcekuti* take them to pasture. This is a time of day when there is much discussion about the state of the animals and where they will be herded that day and by whom.

After the cattle leave the homestead any men who are visiting *enkang'* will exchange the news over a cup of tea or milk with the families they know before they leave to go elsewhere. This is also a time of day when women visit each other to find out what activities are planned and in order to decide who will accompany whom on a particular task. This is because most adult female activities, such as chopping and collecting firewood or going for water, are done in the company of other women or the older girls.

In the morning women usually undertake the essential activities necessary to maintain the household. For example, it is in the morning that most women make their daily trip for water, an activity that is more frequent if beer is being brewed. Women collect wood two to three times a week, depending on a household's demands Women usually do this in groups after they have collected water. Women may also visit the shop in order to buy small items such as flour, sugar and tea. Because women go to the shops for small items they go frequently. Men, on the other hand, go only occasionally. When men go to the shops it is to purchase expensive items like sheets, blankets and large quantities of sugar to brew beer for a ceremony

A woman normally completes her tasks by the afternoon when she will sit with the other women and young children *boo* (outside the house but inside the fence) talking, mending clothing and possibly shaving someone's hair for them. Women may also make beadwork but this is more usually an activity undertaken by the younger women and the girls under the guidance of the older women. The afternoon is also the time of day when women are most likely to visit other *inkang'itie* to talk to friends, relatives, and to visit sick people. Late in the afternoon, as the time approaches for the cattle to return, women clean their calabashes for the evening milking.

During the day the men rarely go inside *inkang'itie* unless it is raining. After the animals have left in the morning the men, if they are not otherwise occupied, will sit *auluo* (outside) under a tree or at *oloing'ate*. It is here that visiting elders will sit, talk and exchange news with their age-mates. A man usually only goes into a wife's house when beer has been brewed, or when a man has come to discuss such private matters as the arrangement of a marriage. By contrast, the public meetings of members of an age-set, *inkiguenat* (elders' meetings; sing. *enkiguena*), are usually convened under a tree a short distance away from *enkang'*. *Inkiguenat* often go on for several hours at a time and may be reconvened on another day if matters have not been resolved.

A husband therefore rarely visits his wife's house during the day. When he requires something from the house (such as a knife, string, hoe, etc.) he will call a small child and ask them to go and ask his wife for it. A man is only likely to go back inside *enkang'* if there is no response to his request. The only other occasions when a husband will re-enter his wife's

house during the day are to request food or to rest when he is either ill or drunk. Men spend a lot of their time away from *enkang'* during the day either checking on the cattle or visiting other *inkang'itie*.

The activities of the boys and girls during the day largely depend upon the time of year. Boys are usually involved in herding or visiting friends while girls are more closely tied to *enkang'* and are either herding animals near the settlement, looking after younger children or helping the women with household tasks like collecting water or chopping wood. If boys are not out herding then they are as frequent visitors to the houses of their mothers as are the girls.

The stock return in the late afternoon, with different types of stock arriving at different times. Those animals herded near *enkang'* return first (see Table 3). The very young calves are the first to return home, with women bringing them back from where they have been tethered during the day. They are then put into the calf pen to await the return of the cows. *Intare*, the older calves and the non-productive cattle are the next animals to return home and then finally the cows.

Once the cows return the women milk them and close the gates. While the cows are being milked the men tend to sit in groups on one side of the enclosure discussing the events of the day and the condition of the animals.

After the gates are closed each family retires to their own house to drink milk or eat. Ideally a wife should feed her husband first, and the children should not be present, but this does not always occur. For example, a woman often gives a son who has been out herding all day something to eat as soon as he returns with the cows. The mother and children tend to eat together after the father.

Young boys and girls (pre-circumcision age) often stay outside (*boo*) until late into the night. Boys spend a lot of time composing and practising songs and in the evening they form groups and sing and dance outside the houses. On these occasions the girls are usually their audience.

In the evening people visit each other, talk about the events of the day and tell the news. If there are several visitors in *enkang'* then this is also the time when the women sort out sleeping arrangements. Older people, if it is very hot, often sit outside their houses talking and listening to the news. Talking and visiting people may continue well after midnight (cf.

Elam 1973). If there are many younger men (post circumcision age) around then the evening may be spent singing, as well as talking, inside the houses.

The day ends when people feel like sleeping. In a house, some people may be sleeping while others are still sitting up and talking. When a woman finally retires for the night, she closes the entrance to her house with *oldiret* (a packing frame, placed on a donkey when a household moves, which doubles as a door; pl. *ildireta*) indicating that she is asleep.

The only visitor likely to arrive at a woman's house after she has gone to bed is a lover. Because husbands are often away for weeks at a time men can safely arrive at the houses of their lovers late at night. A man may climb the thorn fence surrounding a settlement in order to spend the night with his lover and then leave again before dawn.

2.6 Seasonal Changes

This daily routine forms the basis of activity throughout the year. The major variations on these patterns of activity are marked by the distinction between *olameyu* (pl. *ilameyitim*), the dry season, and *olari* (pl. *ilarin*) the wet season.

During *olameyu* the household's efforts focus on the preservation of the herds. This can be an extremely time-consuming activity. When water is scarce the animals may have to travel long distances to water or, as more frequently happened at Ilkerin, the water is 'rationed' and family members are required at the water holes to ensure the orderly watering of the cattle. At times like this it is possible to see more than a thousand animals waiting at a waterhole.

Another consequence of *olameyu* is the increased involvement of the elders in the herding of their animals. Even old men will go out with their sons to ensure that the cattle are properly pastured. They often return home after dark totally exhausted, but this does not deter them from going out with the cattle day after day.

The two periods *olameyu* and *olari* also see basic changes in the herding patterns of the stock (Table 3). Changes in the herd composition between the two seasons mainly relate to the number of sub-divisions of the herds. In the dry season, those cattle that are not strong (e.g. pregnant, old

or sick animals) are kept with the sheep and goats near *enkang'*. This means that the main herd of cattle can travel long distances to pasture. This is also necessary because of the time spent in travelling to water and it is only the fit animals that can sustain themselves on little water whilst making long journeys to pasture. In the dry season cattle are generally watered every second day (once every three days if water is very scarce). The people also water the sheep and goats on alternate days. The women water the young calves by hand with water that contains herbs so that it will 'make the calves hungry for grass'.

This is also the time of year when people are most likely to split up the herds between relatives in different *inkang'itie*. If conditions become particularly harsh then the people will also start to move away from the area. For example, when the dry season turned into a drought in 1976 at Ilkerin the area was described as being deserted until the rains came.

When the cows are producing less milk, the food available to the people is less. This means that reliance on bought products is increased at a time when there is little available money. The people eat less and those who are poor talk of sleeping to stave off hunger.

Olameyu is therefore a time of reduced physical activity and also one of minimal social activity. If the drought persists the people limit their activities to essential tasks: collecting firewood and water; herding and watering the animals. When the land becomes very dry, and there is very little water, the people describe it as '*olameyu sapuk*' (lit. 'the big drought'). On such occasions people spend most of their time resting and the atmosphere is one of waiting; waiting for the rains to come.

The transformation that takes place with the arrival of rain is spectacular. On one occasion at Ilkerin nearly 50 mm of rain fell in one day after a drought that had lasted several months. The atmosphere changed from hot and dry to cold and wet within an hour. As the rain started to fall all the children ran outside shouting and screaming and getting totally soaked. Suddenly everybody was in high spirits and very excited. After this initial euphoria the houses were jam-packed with excited, wet people trying to get dry around the fires while wet sheets draped from all the posts. The houses were like steam baths. After a few hours the mood became more relaxed and people returned to their regular activities.

During the rainy season there are no constraints on herding patterns because of a shortage of water. People can water their animals every day,

usually on their way to pasture. At this time of year the cattle may all be kept together because pasture is prevalent and they do not have to travel large distances. They can also leave *enkang'* late and return early, making the day a less arduous one for the herders. If the subsistence needs of the family are adequately met then some animals may be taken to lower altitudes where there has been localised rain. Because the herd is split into more groups a greater number of children spend their time as *ilcekuti*. For instance, during the rainy season, it is usually the young boys and girls who stay with the sheep and goats because they herd them close to the homestead, while in the dry season they are herded further away from home and it becomes the task of older boys (Table 3). During the wet season the older girls are also involved in herding the calves if they form a separate herd. These calves travel further from *enkang'* than *intare*. This means that during *olari* the only people who are not regularly involved in herding are the adult men and women, and the moran if there are sufficient other people for the task. The difference between wet and dry season herding is that during the wet season it is a less arduous task and the responsibility can often be left in the hands of children.

With the coming of *olari* there is intense activity. Once the cows are producing reasonable quantities of milk people are able to turn their attention to other matters and social activity flourishes. There are two major components to this: the first is activity associated with cattle matters; and the second is ritual activity.

When the rains first arrive cattle often become sick with ailments such as malignant catarrh and stomach infections. Once this initial period has passed men travel all over *IlOitai*, and sometimes to neighbouring sections, in search of animals that they are owed. The men's journeys often combine visiting age-mates, catching up on the news in other areas, attending meetings and collecting debts while attending ceremonies.

Once milk is plentiful people are in a position to provide food and drink for ritual events. People travel large distances to attend ceremonies such as name-givings and circumcisions. The large number of rituals practised by the sections of the Maasai (Spencer 1988: 57, lists 20; Voshaar 1979: 98, lists 22) means that these occasions occur frequently during the rainy season. They can also bring people together from all over *IlOitai* territory if they are major events like the age-set ceremonies of *enkipaata*, *eunoto* and *enkang' oo lorikan*.

Men do most of the travelling to look for cattle and to attend ceremonies. For example, men will travel large distances to ceremonies such as the circumcision of a son's wife-to-be, while women attend only those ceremonies located close to their own *enkang'*. This means that men travel long distances to attend rituals and visit age-mates and stock-associates while the women remain largely tied to their homes. Men may be away from their homes for weeks, if not months, at a time. It is not unusual during *olari*, for instance, for there to be more visiting elders from other areas in *enkang'* than resident males. At such times the women and their sons are effectively left in control of the herds. I return to these considerations later in the thesis.

In this chapter I have described the mode of livelihood of *IlOitai*. By looking at the pastoral practices of *IlOitai* I have laid the foundation for the discussion that follows of politics in *IlOitai* society. But before the discussion can turn to politics it is first necessary to look at the structural aspects of *IlOitai* social organization. This is the subject of Chapter 3.

CHAPTER THREE
SOCIAL STRUCTURE

In the Introduction I discussed the idea that women are subordinate members of Maasai society. Several authors working on the Maasai have suggested this is the case (Jacobs 1965; Llewelyn-Davies 1978, 1981; Spencer 1988). The usual reason given for this subordination is that women do not have access to resources and therefore cannot wield power. Llewelyn-Davies (1978: 219; 1981: 335), for example, quite explicitly links her idea of adult male "superordination" to their control of property. Both Llewelyn-Davies (1981: 336) and Spencer (1988: 198-200) consider that the practice of wife beating illustrates the power and authority that men have over women. The significance of wife beating and of women running away from their husbands I consider in Chapter 6. In Chapter 4 I discuss resources and property. In this chapter I consider another aspect of Llewelyn-Davies' analysis of adult male "superordination".

Llewelyn-Davies (1978; 1981) provides an hierarchical presentation of the life cycle for the Maasai. She suggests that the "superordinate" position of elders is due to the unequal numbers of life cycle stages for males and females. The classifications she uses (Llewelyn-Davies 1978: 216; 1981: 332, 335) are "girlhood" and "womanhood" for females and "boyhood", "moranhood" and "elderhood" for males (with the corresponding Maa terms for an individual in each category being: *entito*, *enkitok*; *olayioni*, *olmurrani* and *olpayian*). In this schema "moranhood" and "womanhood" are equivalent categories that are subordinate to "elderhood". Uncircumcised boys and girls are the most subordinate groups of the five life cycle stages. If one accepts Llewelyn-Davies' assumption that the moran and women are equivalent categories in the life cycle then it is easy to accept her argument that women are subordinate to men.

The way in which Maasai greet each other appears to support this view. It is normal for the children, young men and women to bow their heads as they approach an elder. The man then places his hand on the other person's head as he greets them (Salvadori & Fedders 1973: 39). Men, on the other hand, greet each other by shaking hands. This difference in greeting gestures is misleading because older women (of *entomononi* or *entasat* status) may also greet men by shaking hands with them and they do not bow their heads to young adult men.

Llewelyn-Davies is not the only author to present a simplified view of the life cycle stages of the Maasai. For example, while Talle (1987: 58; 1988: 93-94) presents a more complex picture than Llewelyn-Davies of the life cycle stages, she still leaves several stages out. She lists three life cycle stages for males, the same as those described by Llewelyn-Davies, but adds a further subdivision to the female life cycle stages so that there are a total of six life cycle stages consisting of three stages each for males and females. The female stages she lists are: "*entito* (young girl up to clitoridectomy), *esiankiki* (married woman with young children), and *entasat* (older woman with circumcised children)" (Talle 1987: 58). Jacobs (1965) also discusses life cycle stages and lists four stages for males which he ties to age-set development. These are: "boyhood" ("*ilayiok*") which consists of the uninitiated boys; "warriorhood" ("*ilmurran*") which consists of the junior and senior warriors who have not yet been united into a single age-set; "elderhood" ("*ilmoruak*") which incorporates members of the next three age-sets of men; and "ancient elderhood" ("*ildasati*") for the surviving members of the remaining two age-sets (Jacobs 1965: 242-243). However, he makes no mention of life cycle stages for women.

A closer consideration of the life cycle shows that it is more complex than any of these authors have suggested. If one considers the terms of address and reference based on the life cycle that the Maasai use then there are six stages for both males and females.[1] The equivalence in number of male and female life cycle stages does not support Llewelyn-Davies' idea of the "superordination" of men, even though men and women spend different lengths of time and have different roles attributed to them as they pass through the life cycle. In this chapter I shall therefore begin by examining the ways in which the Maasai divide up the life cycle.

While life cycle stages position every individual within the social system they are only one of a number of ways in which people relate to each

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1. It should also be noted here, although it will be considered in more detail later on in this chapter, that some of these terms, when a first-person possessive is added to them, are also kinship terms. These terms are: *entito*, which becomes daughter rather than girl (as *entito ai*); *enkitok* and *entomononi* which become wife rather than woman (as *enkitok ai* and *entomononi ai* respectively); *olayioni* which becomes son rather than boy (as *olayioni lai*); and *olpayian* and *olmoruo* which become husband rather than man (as *olpayian lai* and *olmoruo lai* respectively). Llewelyn-Davies (1981: 337, 356, fn. 5) suggests that these terms are kinship terms as they stand. In practice, for *llOitai*, the idea of kinship occurs when the term is combined with a possessive. See section 3.4 below for a further discussion of this matter.

other. The remaining sections of the chapter will consider the other major ways in which the Maasai categorize individuals. For example, the second section of this chapter will examine the age-set system. For men, age-sets cross cut life cycle stages and become a crucial element of their adult life. By contrast, there is no equivalent system for the women and for much of their adult life ties created through kinship and marriage form the basis of interaction. I shall consider marriage and kinship after the section on age-sets. I shall discuss how people use these systems of classification in Chapters 6 and 7.

3.1 The Life Cycle

In *IlOitai* the most commonly used mode of address derives from the stages of the life cycle. Greetings usually consist of the term for a life cycle stage, together with a vocative particle (Anon. n.d.: 12-13; Hollis 1905: 14-15; Mol n.d.: 77; Tucker & Ole Mpaayei 1955: 35-37, 212).[2] Examples of this are:

Na kera!	O children!;
Lo ayioni!	O boy!;
Lo murrani!	O moran!;
Na siankikin!	O married women!.[3]

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2. The complete sequence to a greeting is given in Anon. (n.d.: 12-13) and Tucker & Ole Mpaayei (1955: 37).

3. In addition to terms based on the life cycle stages there are three further terms used in *IlOitai*. These are not life cycle stage terms but are specifically used as a form of address for a particular life cycle stage. These are:

'*Eero*!'	which is equivalent to using '*Lo ayioni*!' ('O boy!');
'*Naito*!'	which is equivalent to using '*Na tito*!' ('O girl!'); and
'*Apaayia*!'	which is usually used between men of the same age and instead of using '*Lo payian*!'.

There appears to be no meaningful translation of these terms beyond the signification they have as terms of address (cf. Tucker & Ole Mpaayei 1955: 36).

In order to use these greetings it is necessary for a person to be able to recognise any other individual as belonging to a particular life cycle stage.[4] People can do this because attire and bodily adornment amongst the Maasai provide a distinctive sign system that can be 'read' by others. While it is possible to manipulate this system by dressing inappropriately (see Chapter 6), bodily adornment is generally an accurate indicator of a person's position in the life cycle. Visual cues alone can therefore provide the Maasai with the means to position all other Maasai within the social system and this holds true even when a person is a stranger. Consequently whether one knows a person or not it is always possible to greet them on first meeting and so enter into a conversation.

The terms of address that derive from life cycle stages indicate six stages to the life cycle for both males and females (Fig. 4). In the discussion that follows I give a brief description of appearance, any physical changes, and the appropriate behaviour for each of these stages. I discuss the stages sequentially from the youngest to the oldest and draw comparisons between categories wherever this is relevant. Where changes in a life cycle stage relate to the performance of a ritual then I also briefly describe the ritual. I mention, but do not describe in detail, other rituals that relate to the age of an individual but are not key factors in an individual's transformation from one stage to the next (see Fig. 4). In this section of the chapter I provide a basic description of the life cycle so that in Chapter 7 I can explore more fully the ways in which people use the terms of address that derive from life cycle stages.

Child birth is a private affair that occurs in a woman's house in the presence of one or two other women, one of whom is a practised midwife. As soon as a child is born, and after cutting the umbilical cord, the mother smears it in fat (*eilata*; pl. *iila*). From the time of birth until about the age of six it will be addressed as '*Na kerai*!' meaning 'O child!'. This is regardless of gender. The noun from which the greeting derives is *enkerai* (pl. *inkera*) meaning child (Fig. 4). During these six years a child undergoes a change in attire that visually distinguishes girls from boys. But a change in the term of address does not automatically follow this visual change. It is

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4. This is not the only way in which people can be addressed as both the discussion below and in Chapter 7 shows. However this is the most fundamental set of terms of address because it can be used for anybody who is Maasai.

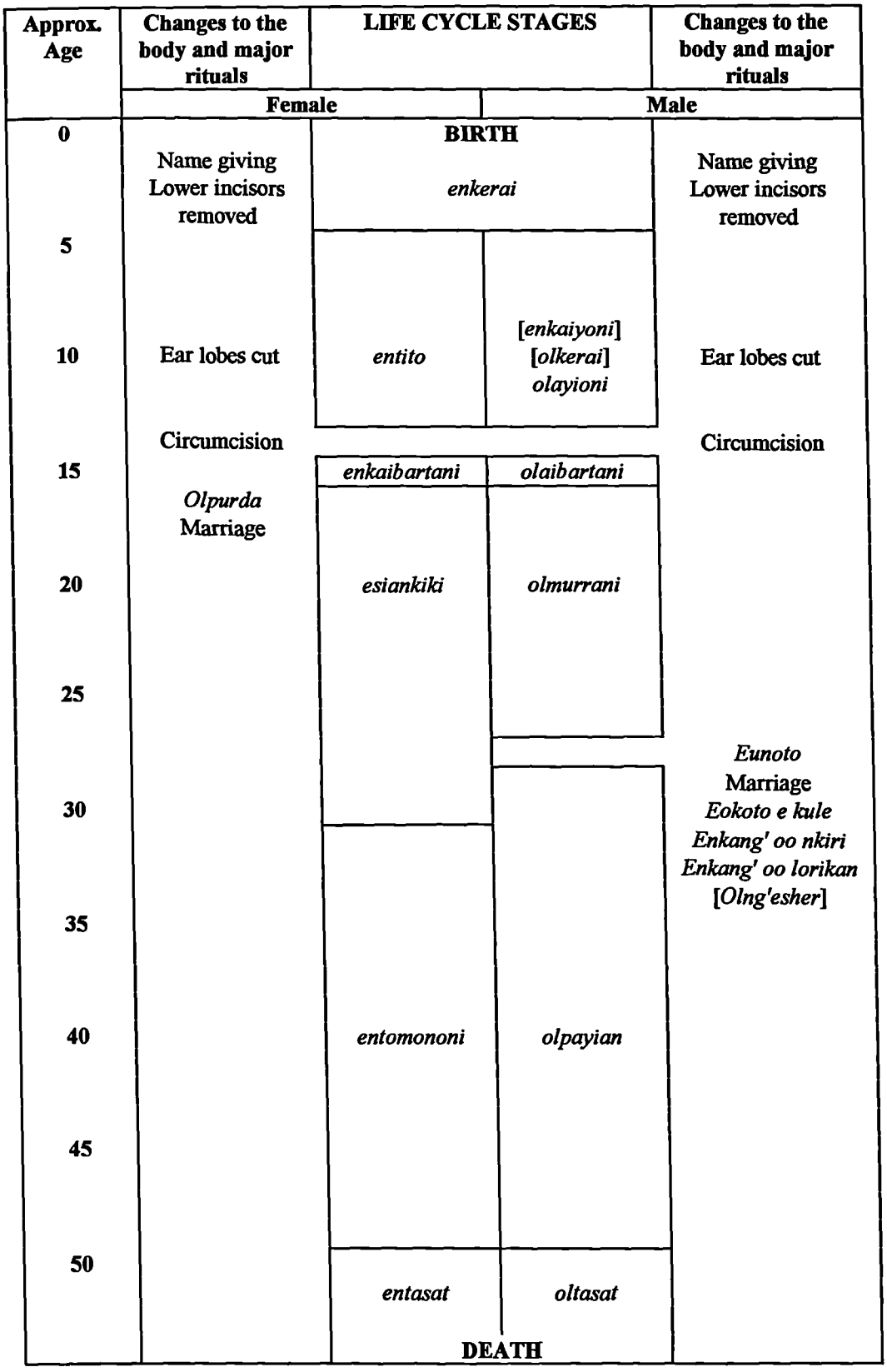


Fig. 4. Life cycle stages and rituals that mark the progression through the life cycle.

not until the physical differences are quite marked between the sexes that gender is also distinguished in the use of a life cycle stage term.

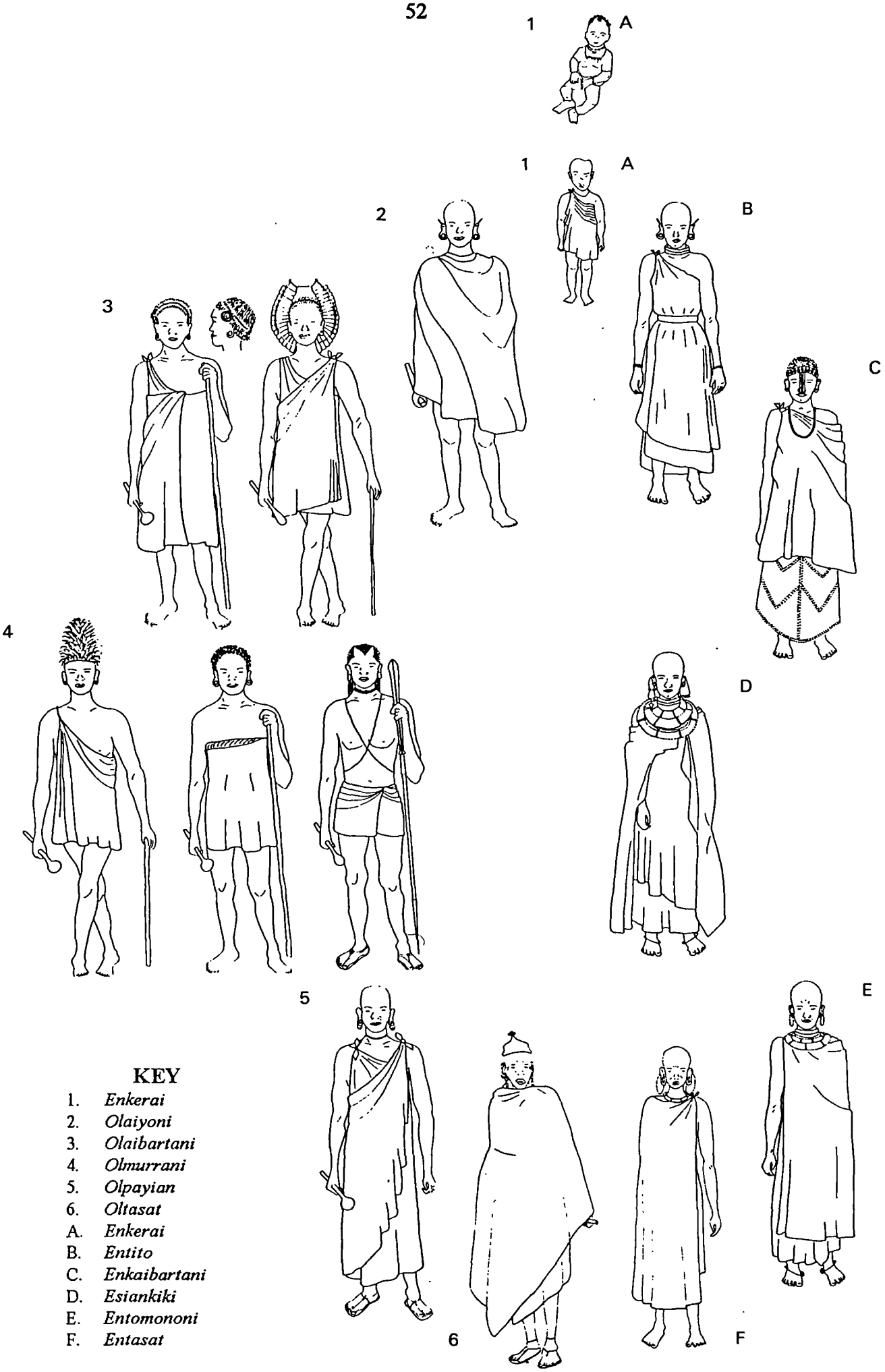
The only attire of newly-born children is the protective amulets that mothers put on their arms, legs and around the neck (Fig. 5). These amulets are removed after the name-giving ceremony (Fig. 4). This ritual occurs at no fixed time and depends upon the family's circumstances. It may occur within months of the birth or it may be postponed for a number of years.

By the time children walk they wear one sheet knotted over their right shoulder, regardless of sex, and beadwork 'jewellery' replaces the amulets of birth (Fig. 5). Girls wear more beadwork than boys and boys begin to carry a long *eng'udi* (walking stick; pl. *ing'udisin*) and a short throwing stick.

From birth the sexes are treated differently by those older than themselves. But it is only when children are walking, and once they start to wear a sheet, that a split occurs in the behaviour of the sexes. Once a child is walking and able to understand messages, both women and men ask children to fetch and carry things for them. This includes getting children to ask other people for the loan of domestic equipment, food and clothing. As children become older and more independent this becomes more of a female activity than a male one. This is because boys start to play outside *enkang'* while girls still spend most of their time in the home.

Children have their closest physical contact with their mothers and other children. There is less contact with men unless they are a close member of the family, such as the child's father, grandfather or an elder brother. As the child begins to walk and becomes more independent even the physical contact with close male relatives diminishes. Young children frequently play together in mixed sex groups but this becomes less common as they get older. The development of different games for boys and girls marks the start of gender differentiation.

By about the age of five girls will start pretending to cook and look after babies. The latter game usually involves the girl in carrying a block of wood on her back, singing to it and feeding it and is usually a solitary game. At this age boys start to develop games which relate to cattle and which they play as groups. One of the favourite games is the mock bull fight. Boys play this by 'charging' two sticks together cut into the shape of bulls' horns. Another common game is the building of imitation *inkang'itie*



KEY

1. *Enkerai*
2. *Olaiyoni*
3. *Olaibartani*
4. *Olmurrani*
5. *Olpayian*
6. *Oltasat*

A. *Enkerai*
B. *Entito*
C. *Enkaibartani*
D. *Esiankiki*
E. *Entomononi*
F. *Entasat*

FIGURE 5: ATTIRE OF THE LIFE CYCLE STAGES

(Ole Saitoti & Beckwith 1980: 66). This involves the construction of a plan of *enkang'* by building a fence from grass or soil on the ground. Children collect stones to represent stock and move them in and out of *enkang'* as if they were herding. Boys usually play this game, but girls may also join in or play it by themselves.

After the eruption of permanent teeth a child has its two lower incisors knocked out. Spencer (1988: 58) describes this as the first in "a series of operations on the child's face, marking its progress to adulthood". But while these "operations" reshape the physical appearance of an individual they do not coincide, except in the case of circumcision, with a change in life cycle stage. Thus, transition from being *enkerai* to the next stage in the life cycle does not correspond to any one event, but rather to an aggregation of signs, accumulated through time, that are distinctive of the next life cycle stage.

In the second stage of the life cycle different terms are used for each gender: girls, from about six to eight years of age until circumcision, are called *intoyie* (sing. *entito*) and boys, from the same age until circumcision, are called *ilayiok* (sing. *olayioni*). While girls are invariably labelled in this way for boys there is a certain amount of flexibility in the labelling. While *olayioni* is the normal term used, people may use either *olkerai* ('child' with masculine prefix) or *enkayioni* ('boy' with feminine prefix) for a boy at the younger end of the range of '*olayioni*' (Fig. 4).

The wearing of different styles of clothing by boys and girls marks the linguistic distinction between the sexes. *Intoyie* wear two sheets. They tie one around the waist that reaches to the ankles and knot another over the right shoulder (Fig. 5). *Ilayiok* wear one sheet tied over the right shoulder which reaches to between the thighs and the knees (Fig. 5).

Girls make beadwork jewellery to wear around their necks, arms and in their ears. It is also as *intoyie* that girls start to wear the distinctive beaded neckband of *IlOitai*, called *endebai*. The basic elements to this beaded leather collar are a band of blue beads that is separated by a line of large red beads from a second band; which consists of alternating bands of red, white, blue and green beads (see Ole Saitoti & Beckwith 1980: 73 [main photograph], for example of two girls wearing *indeba*). Other sorts of beadwork that girls make are *olkatar* (pl. *ilkatari*), which is worn around the arms, and *olmasaa* (pl. *ilmasaa*), which is worn around the neck. Women of child-bearing age also wear these styles of beadwork. Boys wear

some beadwork jewellery made for them by their sisters or sisters' friends. These usually consist of *ilkatari* and single strings of beads around the neck.

It is during this life cycle stage that both boys and girls have holes burnt through the top of their ears and have their ear lobes cut (see Ole Saitoti & Beckwith 1980: 72). The ear lobes are cut somewhere between the age of eight and ten years and plugs of wood, of ever-increasing size, are placed through the lobes to expand them. As the holes at the bottom of the ears expand both boys and girls wear a wide variety of ear ornaments. These consist of a diverse range of objects. Some of the objects worn in the bottom hole are biro tops, metal chains, metal rings, metal beads, wooden blocks, plugs of leaves or a variety of forms of beadwork. Some adult males even place a small metal container of snuff in this hole (see Amin, Willetts & Eames 1987: 157 for an example of this). In the small hole at the top of the ear the ornaments can range from safety pins, metal rings, carved sticks or bones and plastic syringes through to a variety of beadwork. Both males and females wear some sort of ear ornamentation throughout the rest of their lives.

Younger girls spend most of their time near home but may also help the young boys in the herding of the sheep and goats if they are near *enkang'*. Older girls, from about nine to ten years old, start to assist women with domestic activities like cleaning calabashes, milking cows, fetching water and wood, and plastering houses. In addition, they may be responsible for looking after young children while their mothers are absent.

The older girls may also herd the calves. These are taken further away from *enkang'* than are the sheep or goats (see Table 3, Chapter 2). When *intoyie* herd the calves they may wear a third sheet knotted over the right shoulder. This usually involves a girl in persuading her mother of lending her an extra sheet by saying that she will look more attractive with it. When girls herd they may do so in conjunction with a young boy or another girl.

I have said that girls start making beadwork at this stage of their lives. If they are not out herding in the afternoon then they will usually sit with the women *boo* making beadwork with the older women advising them on technique and beadwork patterns.

Boys, by comparison, almost solely occupy themselves with herding. Younger boys herd the calves near home (or may go out with their older brothers) while the older boys, from about the age of nine or ten, spend

most of their time herding the cows long distances from home. When the boys go out herding they may wear an additional sheet (which is borrowed) and tie it either at the centre front or the centre back of the neck. If an older boy has a third sheet to wear then he will often tie the bottom sheet around his waist.

When younger boys are not out with the animals then they spend their time near *enkang'* playing games with each other which include those games that they played when they were *inkera* and new games like 'soccer'.

Older boys, when they are out with the cows, may bring the herds together and set up bull fights between animals from different herds. If they are alone then they may sing and dance (possibly to a bull) or make things out of wood such as throwing sticks, clubs, ear plugs and bulls' horns for the younger children. Boys carry a variety of wooden items which they have usually made themselves, including throwing sticks and a club. Boys use throwing sticks, as they approach moranhood, to fell birds for *imbarisho* (feathered headdresses; sing. *embarish*) which they wear as initiates. When they are older and go out with the cattle they may also carry a sword and a spear.

The labelling of boys and girls as *ilayiok* and *intoyie* respectively, develops once there is a divergence in the activities of the sexes. As they get older, boys become central to a family's herding activities while girls begin to help their mothers in and around the house. It is this divergence of behaviour that starts to prepare boys and girls for their roles as adult members of society. The different activities that they undertake also lead to a physical separation of the sexes that did not occur in their earlier childhood. The only time when the two groups come together on a regular basis in late childhood is in the evenings when the boys sing and dance outside the houses. The girls join the boys but sit or stand around the edges of the male group. When the boys sing and dance the girls form a circle around the boys and add to the chorus, while the boys take turns at singing solo.

As the time for moranhood approaches boys start to grow their hair and ochre it. They also put ornaments and feathers in their hair in imitation of the headdresses they will wear, first as initiates and then as moran. The focus of the boys' attention shifts from herding to spending time roaming the countryside in small bands as *ilamala* (delegations; sing *olamal*). These delegations visit *inkang'itie* where they sing and dance and gain support for

their cause - the introduction of a new period of circumcision. Much of this activity is also preparation for the boys' time as moran. By comparison, girls go through no equivalent period of 'preparation' for their married lives.

The next stage of the life cycle is the only occasion when a ritual event marks the change in status. This is circumcision or *emurate* (pl. *imurat*).[5] Circumcision is performed on girls some time around the age of fourteen or fifteen or sometimes when they are younger. The timing of circumcision for boys depends on when a circumcision period is open. There is a period of one to two years between recruitment into age-groups when the circumcision period for males is closed and no boy is normally operated on. The age range for male circumcision therefore tends to be more variable than that for girls and can occur from about the age of fourteen or fifteen up to, in rare cases, about twenty.

In *IlOitai* boys and girls are not circumcised in groups unless this happens coincidentally. On the occasions when more than one circumcision does occur within *enkang'* on the same day each circumcision is treated as a separate event. The night before a circumcision the initiate's mother shaves the hair of the initiate, and close relatives attending the ceremony, in her home. It is then on the following morning, before the cattle leave *enkang'*, that the circumcision is performed

A woman skilled in the job circumcises a girl at *kutuk-aji* of her mother's house early in the morning. This can be any woman and sometimes is even the girl's mother. Following the operation the girl is led to the bed of her mother where she remains for her period of convalescence. On the afternoon of the day of the circumcision a mother leads her daughter out of *enkang'* for a brief period when the adult women who attend the celebration of the occasion inspect the operation.

For a boy the operation occurs outside his father's cattle gate early in the morning.[6] On the same day, the firestick elders for the new age-group make a fire *boo* (outside the house but inside the fence) using their firesticks. As for a girl, the boy is led to his mother's bed after the operation

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5. This is the pronunciation used in the Ilkerin area of the word listed by Tucker & Ole Mpaayei (1955: 265) as *emurata* or *emuratare*.

6. The operation may also be performed inside *enkang'* but outside the house in the area known as *boo* (Jacobs 1958; Talle 1988: 95). Outside *enkang'* appears to be the more commonly adopted place for male circumcisions in the Ilkerin area.

where he stays while he recuperates. The circumcision of both boys and girls involves a series of other events such as the slaughtering of animals, meat feasting, beer drinking, blessings, singing and dancing. These events are common features of nearly all Maasai rituals.

Following the circumcision both male and female initiates remain confined to their mother's house while their wounds heal. This is for a period of at least, but usually more than, four days. At the end of the period of confinement initiates adopt a distinctive attire and can leave their mothers' houses.

The name given to initiates during the period of recuperation is the same for males and females, the only distinction in the terms being the gender prefix: *ilaibartak* (sing. *olaibartani*) in the case of males and *inkaibartak* (sing. *enkaibartani*) in the case of females (Fig. 4). The terms can be given the English gloss of 'male initiates' and 'female initiates' respectively.[7] This linguistic equivalence reflects a social similarity in the positions of males and females while they fully recuperate from the operation of circumcision. Both are marginal to normal social practice during this period

During their time as *ilaibartak* or *inkaibartak* there are further similarities between males and females: both wear black garments and allow their hair to grow. Female attire consists of either a mother's skin skirt with one black sheet worn over the right shoulder; or two black sheets, one tied around the waist and the other tied over the right shoulder (Fig. 5). A girl wears a distinctive head-band across her forehead, called *olmarisian* (pl. *ilmarisiani*). This is made of leather and has a series of cowrie shells and metal chains sewn onto it (Salvadori & Fedders 1973: 43; Talle 1988: 107). *Inkaibartak* also wear a variety of charms and a necklace of blue beads, called *emurt narok* (lit. 'neck of blue'), which belongs to the initiate's father (Amin, Willetts & Eames 1987: 170-171, 173; Ole Saitoti & Beckwith 1980: 13, 87).

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7. Tucker & Ole Mpaayei (1955: 276) and Ole Mpaayei (1954: 53, fn. 6) give *isipolio* (sing. f. *esipolioi*; sing. m. *osipolioi*) as an alternative to *ilaibartak/inkaibartak*. Tucker and Ole Mpaayei define it as meaning "initiate" while Ole Mpaayei defines it as meaning the "one recovering from initiation". The term is therefore synonymous with *ilaibartak/inkaibartak*. It has not been included in the main text or Figure 4 because it is not commonly used in the Ilkerin area.

There are two possible ways that male initiates can dress (Fig. 5). The first possibility is to wear two black cloths with the bottom cloth tied over the right shoulder and the top cloth tied around the body under the arms (Ole Saitoti & Beckwith 1980: 91; Salvadori & Fedders 1973: 75). The second possibility is to wear a black cloth or skin tied over the right shoulder with possibly another cloth or skin tied over the left shoulder, or in the middle of the chest (Salvadori & Fedders 1973: 72). In addition, all male initiates wear *imbarisho*, *isurutia* (coiled brass earrings which belong to their mothers; sing. *esurutiai*), leather *inamuka* (sandals; sing. *enamuke*) and the same necklace of blue beads that *inkaibartak* wear. They also carry a variety of throwing sticks, a walking stick, a club and a bow with arrows. Boys grow their hair but do not yet plait it (Salvadori & Fedders 1973: 71-75; Ole Saitoti & Beckwith 1980: 90-97).

During the period of recuperation the behaviour of males and females is also similar. Both remain aloof from the daily routine in *enkang'* and spend much of their time watching other people doing things. Girls spend most of their time wandering around nearby *inkang'itie*, visiting other initiates, and uncircumcised friends, while boys join other initiates and roam more widely across the country, visiting other initiates, spending weeks at a time away from the homes of their parents. Both male and female initiates attend ceremonies, especially the circumcisions of their friends, in groups. For these events they paint their faces with white ochre in a distinctive circular pattern which frames the eyes (Salvadori & Fedders 1973: 73).

At the end of the period of recuperation the initiates abandon the special clothing. Their mothers also shave their hair to mark the transformation.[8] For a woman this shaving precedes her marriage.

In normal circumstances the negotiations regarding the marriage of a daughter start long before a girl is circumcised. When this is the case the timing of the marriage depends more upon when the girl recuperates from the circumcision than anything else. Thus, ideally the period between the shaving and marriage is a short one. But a smooth transition does not

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8. Both Hollis (1905: 298) and Spencer (1988: 79) adopt the term *olbarnoti* ('the shaved one') for the newly-shaved moran. However this term can be used more generally for any male or female (*embarnoti*) who has been shaved and need not necessarily relate to only the shaving of an initiate's hair following the recuperation period after circumcision. It is therefore a descriptive term of the physical appearance of someone rather than the name given to a particular life cycle stage. For this reason it is not included in the list of terms in Figure 4.

always occur and a father who has no sons may keep a daughter at home to provide a male heir (*entito e nkang'*; lit. 'girl of the village').

Preceding the marriage of a woman in *IlOitai* one further ceremony takes place. This occurs while people still call the woman *enkaibartani* and involves her in being led to her future husband's *enkang'* where she takes *olpurda*, a drink made from rendered sheep's fat. Once she has taken the fat she returns to her parents' home in preparation for the marriage ceremony. A woman also takes o*lpurda* after she has given birth. This occurs about four days following the birth and in the privacy of the woman's home with only a few other women who are friends or neighbours involved. A woman can milk the cows after giving birth and drinking *olpurda*. This ceremony is repeated after each childbirth. The drinking of *olpurda* therefore marks the end of a liminal period for women and suggests that for *IlOitai* there is a conceptual link between the condition of a woman following circumcision and following childbirth.[9] The fact that it is the husband-to-be's family who provides *olpurda* for a girl prior to marriage also suggests that its performance is linked to female fertility.

Once a girl has drunk *olpurda* and returned to the home of her parents the marriage, or *enkiyama*, can take place. The night before the marriage the mother shaves her daughter and her father blesses her. The following morning the girl dresses in the attire of a bride (e.g. Talle 1988: 129) and is led from her parents *enkang'* by her husband and his 'best man'. When she reaches the home of her husband the women greet her at the gate and taunt her until she cries. She then enters the gate and stands at the entrance to her mother-in-law's or co-wife's house while affines tell her what animals she has been promised for her allotted herd. Then she enters the house where she remains for the rest of the day. Those attending the ceremony celebrate the event by drinking beer, eating, singing and dancing. On the following morning the bride is usually led out of the house by a female affine and shown the animals of her allotted herd. The new bride lives with either her mother-in-law or a co-wife until she has built a house of her own. This may occur within months of her arrival or take a year or more to happen.

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9. Compare this with Talle's (1988: 106) comment that: "A newly circumcised girl should be treated like a woman who has just given birth, that is to say, she should be fed with 'nice' food and exempted from heavy physical work."

Once a woman has been shaved following her time as *enkaibartani* she is called *esiankiki* (pl. *isiankikin*). *Esiankiki* can be given the English gloss of 'young woman' and a woman is called this into her late twenties or early thirties (Fig. 4).

As *enkaibartani* a woman wears normal adult female clothing (Fig. 5). There is no major change in this attire from now until old age and the amount of jewellery worn by the women marks differences between the stages. The basic elements to this clothing are a black or dark blue sheet worn around the waist; a second sheet, usually red, worn knotted over the right shoulder; and a third patterned sheet may be knotted over the chest. When attending ceremonies young women wear many pieces of beadwork jewellery consisting of ornate earrings, *endebai* and anything up to six *ilmasaa* around their necks. *Ilmasaa* are particularly important components of adornment at ritual events because, when the women dance, they create an undulating wave of movement that is an integral part of the dance performance.

Young married women, until they have their own house and their first child, are still relatively free to do as they please. They are in the house of another woman and so are not under the same constraints to provide their husbands with food as they are after they have moved into their own house. It is a time when they are able to move around quite a lot, especially if they are not a first wife, and they may have several lovers. This probably explains why older women view young *isiankikin* as being lazy and irresponsible; and why they are generally regarded as particularly sexually attractive by the men. It is also a time when taking part in *ilamala* associated with *inkamulak oo nkituaak*, or the female fertility blessing, is of major concern. Once a woman has children and her own home it becomes more difficult to detach herself from the domestic domain and her focus of attention becomes the maintenance of the household. But while women with children are more tied to the home they continue to have a number of lovers during this life cycle stage.

Boys become *ilmurran* (sing. *olmurrani*) at the end of their period of recuperation following circumcision, and following being shaved by their mothers, a procedure undertaken at each age-set ritual (Fig. 4). This term has been anglicised as 'moran' and is often translated as warrior. *IlOitai* replace this term of address with other forms following on from the performance of *eunoto*, when a male returns to the home of his parents (see

below). During their time as *ilmurran* males are in a liminal state which lasts for anything from five to fourteen or fifteen years. A series of rituals performed over several years gradually removes this state of liminality. The main rituals associated with this return to normal existence are: *eunoto* and *enkang' oo lorikan* or *olng'esher*, which are celebrated as a group; and *eokoto e kule* (lit. 'the drinking of milk') and *enkang' oo nkiri* (lit. 'the village of meat' but better known as 'the meat eating ceremony') which lift the dietary restrictions that were placed on the boy when he entered moranhood. The milk drinking ceremony is a family affair while the meat eating ceremony is performed in larger groups but not as a single ceremony for the whole age-set (Spencer 1988: 179). The sequence of these ceremonies for an individual usually follows the pattern of: *eunoto*, *eokoto e kule*, *enkang' oo nkiri* and then *enkang' oo lorikan*. Moranhood also marks the beginning of a man's incorporation into an age-set which I discuss in the next section of this chapter. However I should say something here about the formation of an age-set in order to avoid confusion between the use of the terms age-set and age-group.

There are usually two halves to an age-set, called age-groups, and recruitment into these occurs at different times. An interim period, when the period for circumcision is closed, marks the distinction between age-groups. The ritual of *enkipaata*, which opens a circumcision period, and *endung'ore*, which closes a circumcision period, delineate recruitment periods for each age-group. Each 'pair' of age-groups is then brought together as one age-set in the last ritual of the age-set cycle, *enkang' oo lorikan* or *olng'esher*, which is performed several years later.

There are a variety of ways in which *ilmurran* dress (Fig. 5). One possibility is one sheet knotted over the right shoulder, or one sheet tied at the back of the neck. Another style consists of wearing a smaller sheet tied over the right shoulder with a string. The other common styles are: a very short sheet that reaches well above the knees, tied around the waist or one medium-sized sheet wound around the body under the arms, as worn amongst *ilaibartak*. These sheets are usually red. A beaded belt (sing. *entore*; pl. *intoren*) is usually worn around the waist (Ole Saitoti & Beckwith 1980: 136, 137; Salvadori & Fedders 1973: 77) and *ilmurran* carry a range of articles such as spears, swords, sticks and clubs. *Ilmurran* let their hair grow and ochre and pigtail it (Salvadori & Fedders 1973: 87).

During moranhood males spend much of their time away from home, wandering through the territory visiting friends, and practising their singing and dancing. *Ilmurran* live physically apart from their parents' *inkang'itie* in *imanyat* (ritual village; sing. *emanyata*) These are villages built by the women especially for moranhood and other major ritual events. *Ilmurran* inhabit them together with some of their mothers and the young girls who are approaching puberty. A moran takes a portion of his father's cattle to *imanyat* to provide food. *Ilmurran* frequently go to the bush to eat meat at *ilpuli* (meat feasting sites in the bush; sing. *olpul*) and also undertake raids and lion hunts.

The culmination of these activities is the formation of a delegation which supports the 'promotion' of what is now a nascent age-set. The promotion of the age-group occurs at the ceremony of *eunoto*. This ceremony also begins the process of reincorporation of *ilmurran* into society. It takes place in *emanyata* and all those circumcised in the last open period for circumcision attend. Following the ceremony *emanyata* is disbanded and *ilmurran* return to the homes of their parents although the restrictions on food remain until the ceremonies of *eokoto e kule* and *enkang' oo nkiri* have been performed.

While the period for women and men, as *isiankikin* and *ilmurran* respectively, is often perceived as being quite different because of the anti-structural nature of moranhood there are interesting parallels that exist between the two groups. Common to both groups is a belief that their sexual potency is at its peak (cf. Llewelyn-Davies 1978 and Spencer 1988: 68). People regard both groups as being lazy and irresponsible, behaviour that is otherwise treated as unacceptable. Both men and women are considered to be at the most beautiful stage of their lives as *ilmurran* and *isiankikin* and the culture glorifies the physical state of these individuals. Years later both women and men remember the period with affection: women tell tales of the number of lovers they had, while men tell of the dangerous exploits they undertook while being *ilmurran*.

A woman's transition into the next life cycle stage usually occurs in her thirties and after she has had several children. This is when *isiankikin*

become *intomonok* (sing. *entomononi*).[10] The term *inkituaak* (sing. *enkitok*) can also be used but *intomonok* is more commonly used in *IlOitai* (Fig. 4).

There is very little to distinguish physically between *isiankikin* and *intomonok* although *intomonok* are expected to behave in a more mature fashion than are *isiankikin*. A woman's clothing also does not alter in this period although there will be less emphasis on the wearing of beadwork jewellery except on ceremonial occasions (Fig. 5). The one occasion when the two groups tend to be easily distinguishable is at ceremonies where they often dance in separate groups and sing different songs. This is also an occasion when the amount of beadwork worn by the two groups easily distinguishes them from each other. As *intomonok* women probably also have fewer lovers than they did as *isiankikin*. During this period a woman's children will be reaching maturity and she will become heavily involved in the rituals associated with their progression through the life cycle. *Intomonok* may also become mothers in *emanyata* if they have sons who are *ilmurran*.

Once males undergo *eunoto* and return to the homes of their parents they may start to be called *ilpayiani* (married men; sing. *olpayian*), although this is not always immediately the case (Fig. 4).[11] But it is not until men have been fully reincorporated into society, following their marriage and the performance of *eokoto e kule* and *enkang' oo nkiri*, that they become fully-fledged *ilpayiani* or *ilmoruak* (sing. *olmoruo*).[12]

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10. Spencer (1988: 49, fn. 2) comments that *IlMatapato* use the masculine form, *oltomononi*. He gives as its meaning "a generally propitious elder with children, who is especially suitable for a prominent role in any ceremony".

11. Tucker and Ole Mpaayei (1955: 265) list 'senior warrior', which presumably applies to the period following *eunoto*, as one of the meanings of *olmorijoi* (pl. *ilmorijo*; [more commonly known as the name of the poison arrow tree - *Acokanthera schimperi*]). This term is not used in the Ilkerin area. Llewelyn-Davies (1978: 218; 1981: 344) comments that once a male has undergone *eunoto* he may be addressed as an elder, i.e. '*Lo payian*!' or continue to be addressed as '*Lo murrani*!'. This principle held at Ilkerin. The usage depends very much on the context. For instance, women tend to address members of this group as '*Lo payian*!', especially when discussing matters relating to cattle, e.g. anticipated herding and watering patterns; while men of older age-sets tend still to address them as '*Lo murrani*!', irrespective of the context.

12. The term *olpayian* tends to be more commonly used in *IlOitai* than *olmoruo* but the two can be regarded as synonymous for the purposes of the analysis which follows. There is also the possibility of using *olee* (pl. *ilewa*) according to Tucker and Ole Mpaayei (1955: 298) but Mol's (n.d.: 102) definition suggests that this term has a slightly different semantic field. It has therefore not been included in Figure 4.

As *ilpayiani* men adopt the clothing that they will wear for the whole of elderhood (Fig. 5). This remains unchanged from now until a man's death. Men wear one large sheet (usually calico) tied over the right shoulder. They may tie a second sheet over the left shoulder and sometimes a third sheet across the chest. In addition, men like to wear blankets, red by preference, wrapped around the neck. But a blanket remains an uncommon part of the attire of men when they first return to the homes of their parents. Men also carry *eng'udi*, *orinka* (club; pl. *irinkan*) and wear hats (sing. *enkopia*; pl. *inkopian*), if they can acquire them.

When a young man first returns to *enkang'* following *eunoto,* life revolves around the building up of the herds and the arranging of one's first marriage. Many young men get involved in the selling and buying of cattle, even if their fathers have not yet handed over total control of their allotted herds. They travel together as small groups, usually based on the friendships they formed as *ilmurran*, to the cattle markets at such places as *Encore Emuny* and Mulot to sell and buy animals. Later on in this period as *ilpayiani*, and once married, most fathers will hand over control of their allotted herds to their sons. Men can then become the managers of their herds and heads of households. Once this is the case the men concentrate their effort on stock transactions with other Maasai, rather than on the sale of animals at markets like Mulot and *Encore Emuny*.

Because men have been incorporated into an age-set over this period of time, their activities centre on the age-sets. For example, men hold *inkiguenat* in order to discuss issues which concern the age-set and the wider community. Men also travel large distances to attend the rituals of their age-mates, and their age-mates' children. It is also during the period as *ilpayiani* that men will act as *ilpironi* (sing. *olpiron*) or firestick elders to a new age-group and age-set.

In old age gender differences are again minimal and the life cycle stage terms reflect this. The term derives from the adjective *tasat* (pl. *tasati*) which Tucker and Ole Mpaayei (1955: 278) define as meaning "disabled, withered, weakly". The life cycle stage terms are *intasati* (sing. *entasat*) for old women and *iltasati* (sing. *oltasat*) for old men (Fig. 4).

There is a shift away from excessive adornment in old age for both sexes. Old women often wear only two sheets with the first tied around the waist and usually black in colour (Fig. 5). The second is usually a large white sheet, knotted over the right shoulder. They may also wear the

remnants of a husband's blanket. It is usually as *intasati* that women stop wearing the distinctively *IlOitai endebai* (except at ritual events) and the only jewellery worn on a regular basis is a single, simple *olmasaa*.

It is assumed that *intasati* no longer have any lovers and therefore have no need to beautify themselves. However, this does not preclude them from continuing a friendship with a man who has been a lifetime lover. Women remain active in old age and usually still maintain a house even when their husbands have died. They still have to milk, fetch water, collect firewood and plaster their houses. It is only when a woman becomes senile, and if her husband has already died, that she is likely to give up this independence and live with a daughter or son.

Old men tend to wear only one sheet (a large calico one tied on the right shoulder), together with a blanket (Fig. 5). Hats remain popular. Old men tend to continue to carry walking sticks and clubs only when they go on a long journey.

There is a contrast in the relative influence of old women and old men. In old age a woman will either be living near a daughter or have daughters-in-law available to help with the work (cf. Talle 1988: 2). Older women maintain a social network and may spend time away from home looking after a sick relative or helping a daughter who is pregnant. A sense of solidarity may also exist amongst the women who are old and this is reinforced by activities like the sharing of advice, gossip and beer.

A woman is often a widow by this stage in her life. When this is the case her husband's living age-mates tend to treat her as a surrogate age-mate. For example, if an age-mate visits *enkang'* he will spend time with the woman and tell her the news, just as if he were speaking to her husband. She also has more authority and independence than before. The way old women greet men reflects this. When an old woman greets a group of men she no longer bows her head and allows them to place a hand on it, but instead walks up to them and holds out a hand for it to be shaken. Old women may also acquire a degree of ritual importance within *enkang'* and become involved in such activities as giving blessings on ceremonial occasions.

By contrast, a man in old age finds that the age-set of which he is a member declines in significance as the members die. In addition his influence over the herds diminishes unless he is particularly forceful and has not yet handed over control to his sons. Both factors lead to a man's

diminished involvement in the social life around him and in a reduction in his ability to influence events. While old women tend to remain active, old men tend to become less active and it is not uncommon to see an old man alone, sleeping *auluo* under a tree during the day.

Ultimately, in old age, the influence of the individual depends very much upon one's personality. Irrespective of sex, respected individuals can play a role as cultural and ritual arbiters within a settlement. This can occur even though, at this stage of their lives, much of their involvement in social activity is through others.

I have now described the various stages of the life cycle of *IlOitai*. In this outline I have shown that while movement through the life cycle is an irreversible progression each moment of transition is negotiable. The one exception to this pattern occurs immediately following on from circumcision.[13]

While there are distinctive features of attire that go with particular life cycle stages many of the transformations are gradual and occur with an accumulation of attributes that suggest the new stage has been reached. Movement from one stage to the next happens over a period of time as the subtle changes begin to take place in both the appearance and behaviour of an individual. There is also a certain amount of anticipation that goes with this progression. For example, the use of a life cycle stage term often precedes an individual's movement into that stage. This usually occurs when a particularly apt action or the appropriate appearance of an individual fits the life cycle stage concerned. Others respond to this by acknowledging it in the way they address a person. There is consequently a constant interplay of action and reaction that reinforces an individual's progressive movement through the life cycle stages. It also suggests that transferral from one life cycle stage to the next is something that an individual must work at rather than passively take on.

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13. Circumcision clearly marks both male and female entry into the period as *olaibartani* and *enkaibartani* respectively. The period as *inkaibartak* is clearly demarcated on entry by circumcision and on departure by marriage for women. For males the beginning of being *ilaibartak* is marked by circumcision and at the end by the initiates having their hair shaved by their mothers. In both instances the distinctive clothing of the initiate is also totally abandoned when the individual moves on to the next life cycle stage.

But I should emphasise that the developmental process is an irreversible one. One man in the Ilkerin area thought of himself as being *olmurrani* even though he was adult, married and had children. People treated his behaviour with amusement and agreed that he was mad.

While an individual must work at adopting the appropriate behaviour and attire for moving from one life cycle stage to the next, what is more important is how people use these categories in order to relate to each other. The implications of this system are the subject of Chapters 6 and 7.

3.2 The Age-Set System

The review of the life cycle stages in the previous section of this chapter shows that there are the same number of stages for both males and females. While it is clear from the data that for some of these stages it is possible to establish an equivalence across the sexes for the categories, there is no obvious female equivalent for moranhood. I have stated that there are parallels between the behaviour of *isiankikin* and *ilmurran*, but *isiankikin* are not in a liminal state like *ilmurran*. This is because moranhood is not simply a life cycle stage. It is also a rite of passage that involves the formation of a new group, the age-set.

The exact role of age-sets has been the subject of some debate and there is a substantial literature on them (Baxter & Almagor 1978; Bernardi 1952, 1954, 1985; Fosbrooke 1948, 1956; Jacobs 1958, 1965, 1973, 1979, 1981; La Fontaine 1978; Spencer 1976, 1977, 1978, 1984, 1988; Stewart 1972, 1977). Part of the confusion in the literature on Maasai age-sets has arisen out the confounding of life cycle stages with the age-sets. This has led to the age-sets being divided into a series of age-grades (Jacobs 1965 and taken up by Stewart 1977). For example, Jacobs (1965: 243, Fig. 15) describes *ildasati* (= *iltasati*) as the age-grade of "ancient elders". But any feature of behaviour that appears to be distinctive is as a result of a man's position in the life cycle and not because his age-set passes through a particular age-grade. The idea of a series of age-grades through which the Maasai age-sets pass has not only given the age-sets a status of individuality and uniqueness at a moment in time that is not apparent in practice, but it is also an unhelpful model upon which to base an understanding of the Maasai

age-sets.[14] While some authors have adopted the idea (Bernardi 1985; Jacobs 1965; Stewart 1977), the more recent ethnographic literature on the Maasai largely avoids confusing age-grades, life cycle stages and age-sets (Llewelyn-Davies 1978, 1981; Spencer 1988; Talle 1987, 1988).

Age-sets can be described as bounded, communal groups into which males are recruited, largely on the basis of age.[15] There is no uncertainty or ambiguity about membership and after recruitment an individual is a member of an age-set for life. Recruitment periods for Maasai age-sets are finite and entrance follows on from circumcision. During the period of formation for the age-set several rituals are performed, some of which I have already outlined. Of particular significance is *eunoto* which occurs separately for each age-group and marks the beginning of the reincorporation of *ilmurran* into normal social life. As I pointed out in the previous section of this chapter, after *eunoto* the young men may be called *ilpayiani* rather than *ilmurran*. The ceremony of *enkang' oo lorikan*, or *olng'esher*, combines two age-groups into one age-set several years later.

Thus, the time from when a male is shaved and adopts the attire of moranhood after his circumcision, up until *eunoto*, is therefore the time when young men are in the anti-structural state of being *ilmurran*. Typical attributes of the anti-structural nature of moranhood are the physical space where moran live, and the sexual and eating prohibitions that are placed upon them. *Ilmurran* are physically isolated from *inkang'itie* in their own 'villages' or *imanyat*. While *ilmurran* do not permanently live in *imanyat* they are the focus of the activities of *ilmurran* and it is through their time as residents of *imanyat* that the young men build up links with their age-mates and a sense of shared identity.

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14. Being a firestick elder is a status that links a member of one age-set to those belonging to the alternative age-set below in a special relationship with ritual significance. I give a fuller account of these differences under the section on Anthropological Terms at the beginning of the thesis.

15. If one follows Radcliffe-Brown's (1950: 41) definition of corporate group, then a Maasai age-set fits this category on the grounds that "its members ... come together occasionally to carry out some collective action - for example, the performance of rites". Talle (1988: 92) accepts this usage and talks of "the male population [being divided] into corporate age-sets". However, in order to avoid confusion with Spencer's (1965: xxii-xxiii) use of the term corporate to describe Samburu clans, I do not use the term here to describe either the nature of Maasai age-sets or the groupings of people who come together to form *ilamala*.

The food taboos reinforce the links between *ilmurran*. *Ilmurran* should only drink milk in the presence of a fellow *olmurrani* and they should eat no meat that a married or circumcised woman has seen. The former restriction means that moran have to seek each other out in order to drink milk while the latter restriction means that *ilmurran* spend long periods of time at *ilpuli* in the bush eating meat. These restrictions are finally lifted at the ceremonies of *eokoto e kule* and *enkang' oo nkiri*, which occur some time after the performance of *eunoto*.

Both of the food restrictions imposed on *ilmurran* reflect the ideals of moranhood. The need to drink milk in the presence of an age-mate and the prohibition of eating meat in the presence of women reinforce the idea of mutual dependence on each other and separates boys from their mothers. The restrictions placed upon the sexual activity of *ilmurran* also reinforces their separation from women. *Ilmurran* are not legitimately able to have sexual relations with any married woman and the only acceptable sexual partner is an uncircumcised girl. While these restrictions are often broken they again illustrate the conceptual separation of *ilmurran* from the women.

The ideals of moranhood therefore emphasise the separation of young men from their mothers and also the concept of sharing. It is the latter of these two concerns that carries over into the life of the age-mates once they form a fully-fledged age-set. This experience is also the basis of the social networks used by men as elders.

Amongst the Maasai, although there has been some repetition of age-set names in the past (Fosbrooke 1956; Jacobs 1965: 293-294, fn. 1), they do not follow a cyclical pattern of naming. In this the Maasai differ from some of their neighbours like the Nandi who treat age-sets as part of a cyclical pattern (Huntingford 1953, 1969; Le Vine & Sangree 1962; Peristiany 1939).

I have already mentioned the clearly defined relationships between alternate age-sets. A new age-set is initiated by the members of the alternate age-set above them, the firestick elders, or *olpiron*. These elders act as the ritual and moral guardians of the new age-set and are often referred to as their sponsors. They arrange the major age-set rituals for the new group and have the power to curse the set that they sponsor if they feel that the group is behaving irresponsibly. While firestick elders rarely use this power the possibility of it remains a powerful sanction over the new age-set (see Chapter 4).

In the Introduction I stated that some authors describe age-sets as being political institutions (Dyson-Hudson 1966; Huntingford 1953; Jacobs 1965; Lambert 1956; Mair 1962).[16] Were this to be the case, then one could draw a clear distinction between the accessibility of the sexes to the political process. For the Maasai, this would translate into the age-set being the political forum of the men and the domestic domain being the political forum of the women.

Such a simple dichotomy is problematic. As Baxter and Almagor (1978: 9) have pointed out, it is not age-sets that control the physical resources that go with production. This means that age-sets do not have the means to enforce any decisions they make. It is therefore more appropriate to view age-sets as a forum for the discussion of issues leading to the resolution of disputes, rather than as authoritarian organisations that dictate solutions to problems. As such age-sets tend to operate at the local level, with age-mates from a small area meeting to discuss common problems. Thus while age-mates may mediate in disputes between members of an age-set, they can only deploy moral or ritual sanctions in order to enforce their will.

In addition, one might expect that women have no role or right of representation in age-set discussions. This is not the case as the following example shows:

EPISODE 1.

> It was the dry season. *Ole* Sipei had sold all his cattle to buy beer. An age-mate had given him a female calf (*enkashe*; pl. *inkasho*) and lent him its lactating mother so that he could feed his family. He sold the calf in order to buy beer. This meant that the family had no animals they could call their own and only a limited supply of milk before the cow dried up. Seiyan, his wife, was pregnant and had three other children to feed. Through me she had been able to arrange for her son (about eight years old) to get a free meal at Ilkerin Primary School each day. However there was little she could do to feed her two daughters and her husband because she had no relatives in the area upon whom she could depend (she was from a neighbouring tribe). Because she had no cows to milk she was relying on 'begging' milk from other women. In the end she left her house in protest

16. This matter will be considered in more detail in Chapter 4. It is introduced here simply to show that there are problems with the idea.

at her position and moved into Maitukaiya's (actually her next-door neighbour).

As a result of this act a group of *Ole* Sipei's local age-mates called a meeting to discuss the fact that Seiyan was not feeding her husband. Many of the other women privately expressed the feeling that it was bad (*'eitorrono'*) that a meeting had been called by the man's age-mates as a result of Seiyan not looking after her husband properly. The meeting was convened in Seiyan's house and she was asked to defend herself. Later *Ole* Sipei was also called to the meeting. (This was quite a private affair and it was difficult to get first-hand accounts of the proceedings.)

Seiyan defended her position and no sanctions were taken against her, but she did agree to return to her house. Once she returned home the situation remained unchanged and she still relied upon handouts from neighbours, friends and lovers in order to support and feed her family, as had been the case before her moving out.

This example shows that when the age-set called a meeting about Seiyan's behaviour it was necessary to call upon her to represent her case. Consequently one cannot regard women as being treated as jural minors. If this were the case then someone other than Seiyan would have presented her case. I shall consider this Episode in more detail in Chapter 5 but it is important to note here that, not only can women represent themselves to age-sets, but that when they do so they may represent themselves successfully. In this case Seiyan convinced the meeting that she had a valid case and the participants applied no sanctions to her.

A woman may also use her husband's age-mates to resolve a family dispute as the following example shows:

EPISODE 2.

Ng'oto Moyioi (a daughter of Maitukaiya) appeared at our *enkang'* with her children and announced that she was not going home because she was 'in dispute' with her husband who wanted to give one of her cows away. Her house was located in the next *enkang'* (about 300 metres away). In the end she spent the night at the house of the wife of *Ole* Takeu (*IlDeregaiyani* - same age-set as her husband) after our family had fed her and the children.

The following day her husband appeared and told her that she need not bother coming home but late in the afternoon she persuaded *Ole* Takeu to lead her back to her

house and then to mediate with her husband. Her husband remained in our *enkang'* drinking beer that day. When he returned home neither *Ng'oto* Moyioi or her husband took further action. The cow over which the dispute had arisen remained in the family herd.

In these two cases domestic disputes have become a matter of public concern. When this happens the age-set of the man whose family it concerns may become involved in the resolution of the dispute. But there are also cases where the age-set may try to interfere in the domestic affairs of a family as the following example shows:

EPISODE 3.

Ole Sipei (of Episode 1) had sold all his animals for drink and had been lent three milch cows by *Ole* Ngirrimpa (a fellow age-mate) who lived in our *enkang'*. The first-born calves of these cows were given to him and when he sold the first one while it was still suckling *Ole* Ngirrimpa took back his claim in the other two calves. He said that *Ole* Sipei could only keep the cows as long as they were lactating, so that his family did not starve. Despite *Ole* Sipei's 'irresponsibility', he was a very good raconteur and singer and at least three of the women in our *enkang'* were currently his lovers.

Ole Sipei then moved from our *enkang'* to that of his eldest daughter's future in-laws. However he still visited our *enkang'* frequently to get milk and beer from his lovers and to spend the night with one of them whenever their husbands were away. *Ole* Ngirrimpa did not like his continued frequenting of our *enkang'* and called a meeting of his fellow age-mates to try and put a stop to it. During the meeting *Ole* Paket announced that *Ole* Sipei's continued presence in our *enkang'* was largely because Maitukaiya was his lover.

The public announcement of this fact could have had dire consequences for Maitukaiya because the marriage of *Ole* Sipei's second daughter to Maitukaiya's second son was being negotiated at the time. Also between the women there was some feeling that to have a future in-law as a lover was a bad thing. The women speculated that the very least Maitukaiya could expect was a beating from her husband when he found out what was going on.

Papa, her husband, had not gone to *enkiguena* because he was away at the time. When he arrived back the following day Maitukaiya gave him some beer and proceeded to tell him about *enkiguena*. She sat down next to him and

explained what the men had said at *enkiguena*. She said that at *enkiguena* it had been stated that *Ole* Sipei visited our *enkang'* frequently because he was Maitukaiya's lover. In the process of telling Papa this story she implied that it was a figment of their (*IlDeregaiyani*) imagination. She added that she was telling *Papa* herself so that he did not hear the gossip first.

As she was completing her story *Ng'oto* Dalamia came in (she was visiting her sister who lived in our *enkang'* and she later became Papa's lover) and supported Maitukaiya, saying that when *Ole* Sipei had come to our *enkang'* two days earlier Maitukaiya had given him tea to drink which was the polite thing to do because he was a potential future in-law. Then they had told each other the news and then *Ole* Sipei had departed, the implication being that there was no evidence of impropriety in their relationship.

When the women had finished speaking *Papa* announced that he would not beat Maitukaiya as people gossiped and chattered without knowing what they were talking about and that these youngsters (*IlDeregaiyani*) did not know everything.

He stood by his word and did not beat Maitukaiya. Whenever *Papa* was away *Ole* Sipei continued to visit our *enkang'* and remained Maitukaiya's lover until the time I left the field.

In this case the junior age-set unsuccessfully attempted to use Maitukaiya as the scapegoat of their own concerns about *Ole* Sipei. Maitukaiya was able to persuade her husband that despite what the junior age-set claimed about her behaviour he should ignore their accusations and take no action against her. Her husband agreed with her and referred to the junior age-set as youngsters who did not know what they were talking about.

These three examples show that the involvement of women in the affairs of age-sets ranges from the possibility of representing their own case to an age-set meeting, to using informal techniques of persuasion, outside the framework of the age-set, in order to influence the course of events. More important than the views of the age-set in this political process is whether the women wish to pursue a matter that is under discussion by an age-set. Often women are not interested in the sorts of matters that are

discussed by an age-set, but when they are, they are able to use a variety of devices in order to present their own point of view.

Thus while women are not members of age-sets, they can influence the actions and decisions of age-sets. One can therefore see that to divide the political world of the Maasai into a public, male, age-set domain and a private, domestic, female domain is problematic. To do so would necessarily exclude women from the political processes associated with the age-sets which is not the case. I shall discuss these ideas in more detail in Chapters 4 and 5.

While women are not members of an association like that of the age-set they can and do develop groups for special purposes that resemble those of the age-sets. For example, Llewelyn-Davies (1978) suggests that female *ilamala* (deputations) leading up to *inkamulak oo nkituaak* (female fertility blessing); and the ritual beating, *olkishoroto*, of a woman who has given birth to a stillborn child, or of a man who has had intercourse with a woman who is pregnant (Hollis 1910; Llewelyn-Davies 1978); are examples of female solidarity. These occasions involve the women in forming themselves into a group who then undertake a specific task, such as the soliciting of male support for a blessing or the beating of a person who has broken the accepted codes of sexual practice. Boys also undertake *ilamala* in preparation for the establishment of an age-set and leading up to *enkipaata* (boys' dance). They are also undertaken by members of an age-set in order to coerce members into a particular course of action (Spencer 1988: 213). Thus this form of joint action is commonly used by a variety of people and is not restricted to the age-sets. *Ilamala* are an interesting example of group action that I shall discuss in more detail in Chapter 5.

Llewelyn-Davies (1978) also describes women as holding meetings in order to arrange the delegations leading up to *inkamulak oo nkituaak*, as well as forming a female *enkiguena* in order to discuss whether they should perform *olkishoroto*. However, these groups are ephemeral and do not provide a fixed forum for discussion of issues in the same way as age-set *inkiguenat*. They are only formed on isolated occasions and do not involve a pre-existing, 'hierarchical' ordering, based on times of circumcision, that could define socially distinct categories of women.[17] Consequently the

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17. However, Llewleyn-Davies (1978: 225) does talk of one occasion when a division occured between the younger women, which she described as "the junior (fertile)

groupings are not automatically available for action, as and when it is required.

In summary, the experiences of a man during moranhood instil ideas of communalism and sharing that remain with him for the rest of his life. The age-sets provide men with a social network that has the potential to extend across the whole of Maasailand. These qualities provide men with the possibility of establishing relationships throughout Maasailand and so provide the means by which stock can be shifted to better areas in times of drought. For example, at *enkang' empaash*, when there was a drought at *Olpusimoru* in 1982, one *IlPurko* man and his family temporarily moved in with his *IlOitai* age-mate who had previously spent some time in *IlPurko* country (Fig 2, House 3 - second occupants). There were also other *IlPurko* families who moved in with *IlOitai* families in this period.

These networks are important for the long-term social reproduction of the Maasai and are continually reinforced by the activities of the men. During the rainy season men travel widely across Maasailand, seeking animals from age-mates, and collecting debts from others. In this way age-mates are continually reminded of the ideals of the group. When there are disputes it is important that they be resolved in a way that does not threaten the integrity of the group. This requires mediation. *Inkiguenat* are important here because they are the forum through which major disputes are resolved non-violently.

Pivotal to the success of the domestic unit is its ability to reproduce itself and this is dependent upon the continued fertility of the women. In those instances where female gatherings occur, like *ilamala* and *olkishoroto*, it is the threat to female fertility that concerns the women. Female networks, by comparison with male networks, operate at a more local level and largely relate to the family and the maintenance of the allotted herd of a woman. The day to day survival of the domestic unit and the family is the concern of the women, as Chapter 7 will show. Marriage and kinship form the basis of the domestic unit and it is these two aspects of the social structure that I now consider.

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women", and the older women because the young women felt that the older women were not interested in the proceedings associated with *inkamulak oo nkituaak*.

3.3 Marriage

Marriage is the basis upon which new domestic units are formed and it is the domestic units that control pastoral production. But marriage is also important because of the new alliances created that can potentially be utilised in building up a family's herds. In addition, in cases where a man has more than one wife, not only is there an increase in the number of alliances that a man can build up, but there is also the possibility for greater flexibility in the practical management of the herds.

I gave a brief description of a marriage earlier in this chapter. Following marriage a woman lives with either her mother-in-law or a co-wife until she has built her own house. During this period she is expected to milk her allotted herd, collect water and provide her husband with food, but, as I have already said, a young married woman before she has children is relatively carefree. Relationships with moran are not uncommon and young wives are often perceived as being irresponsible and lazy. But once a woman starts to have children these images change. She becomes more tied to the home and the community perceives her as being more mature and responsible. Women who are infertile usually adopt one or more children, through female relatives. In this way no mature, married woman is without a family of her own. A married woman is therefore responsible for the care of her family and the allotted herd that is allocated to her on behalf of her sons.

While marriage is relatively stable amongst the Maasai women may leave their husbands either permanently or for several months at a time if they are unhappy with their treatment. Two women at *enkang' empaash* permanently left the homes of their husbands during my fieldwork (Fig. 2, Houses 8 & 12). In a third case, *Ng'oto* Nalarri returned to her mother and father's home (Fig. 2, House 2) for several months having deserted her first husband and then being married to another man. Her second marriage was possible because her father had provided her with a milking herd. She took these animals to her new husband but they were to provide the subsistence needs of herself and her children. Her long stay with her parents related to the difficulties she had in her second marriage. There were also two cases in the Ilkerin area of older women (*entomononi* status) who had left their husbands to live with their lovers.

I should say something here about lovers. While I discuss the subject in more detail in Chapter 7, the structural aspects of lover relationships are relevant to the present discussion on marriage. Both Llewelyn-Davies (1978: 231) and Spencer (1988: 177) have labelled certain lover relationships as "adulterous", thus implying a breakdown of the marriage rules when these relationships occur. It is therefore necessary to consider these cases more closely in order to see whether this is the case.

Llewelyn-Davies (1978: 231) classes any case of a sexual relationship between a woman and a man of an age-set junior to that of her husband as "adulterous" but adds that the worst form of adultery is between a woman and a moran. Spencer (1988: 177) agrees with Llewelyn-Davies' assessment that there are degrees of adultery and distinguishes three levels. The first form of adultery that Spencer (1988: 177) describes is what he calls the "legitimate" affairs that a man may have with the wives of his age-mates. These are of little concern and are unlikely to lead to reparations. On the other hand, people see the relationships that a man may have with a woman whose husband is two (firestick elders to oneself) or more age-sets above that of his own as being particularly bad; while those relationships with a woman whose husband is of the age-set above his own are of no great concern (Spencer 1988: 177). Spencer explains the lack of concern amongst elders for the last type of "adultery" on the grounds that there exists no age-set curse between the two age-sets involved.

Fieldwork with *IlOitai* suggests that these classifications of different forms of adultery have little real meaning. Whether women perceive it as dangerous or not they are often involved in lover relationships with men of junior age-sets to that of their husband's, and relationships with men of two or more age-sets below one's husband's are just as common as those with the age-mates of one's husband (Tables 5 & 6). The common occurrence of these relationships undermines any argument about their adulterous nature because any accusation of adultery would suggest a lack of tolerance of their occurrence. Thus while certain types of relationships might be classed as 'dangerous', from the practical point of view, it is not whether one is involved in such a relationship that matters but rather whether one gets caught in the act.

Lover relationships are never well-guarded secrets between the women. It is quite common for women to exchange names of lovers if they are drinking beer together, are walking to a ceremony, or if they go

shopping. Any reprisal for the lovers one has is therefore unlikely to come from the women. Usually the threat to these relationships comes from either a woman's husband or a son. But, as Llewelyn-Davies (1978) points out, this threat is only really important if the couple are caught in the act. If this occurs then both the man and the woman are liable to be punished.

Individual	Age-set of husband	Age-set or group of lover
1	*IlTareto*	*IlTerito*
2	*IlTerito*	*IlDeregaiyani*
3	*IlTerito*	*IlDeregaiyani*
4	*IlTerito*	*IlKiseeya*
5	*IlDeregaiyani*	*IlDeregaiyani; IlDeregaiyani; IlKiseeya*
6	*IlDeregaiyani*	*IlDeregaiyani; IlKiseeya*
7	*IlDeregaiyani*	*IlDeregaiyani*
8	*IlDeregaiyani*	*IlKiseeya*
9	*IlDeregaiyani*	*IRaantai; IRaantai*
10	*IlDeregaiyani*	*IRaantai; IlKeekonkop*

Table 5. Age-set or age-group membership of a woman's husband and her lovers.

No. of age-sets apart	No. of relationships
same	4
1 below	7
2 below	3
3 below	1

Table 6. Number of lover relationships between different age-sets.

It is therefore in the best interests of both parties not to publicise a relationship if there is the likelihood that knowledge of it will cause problems. The data from Ilkerin suggest that in the case of those relationships that might technically create problems for the partners involved most people chose to ignore them. As Llewelyn-Davies (1978) suggests, the real problems arise with moran.

I discuss the reasons why this should be the case in Chapter 7. But it is worth noting here that there are only two occasions when knowledge of an unapproved-of lover becomes public knowledge and these are at age-set

rituals. This is at *eunoto* and at *enkang' oo lorikan* or *olng'esher*. On both occasions a moran is meant to confess his love affairs with the wives of members of *olpiron*. The public confession of lovers is therefore restricted only to those relationships between women and men from the adjacent junior age-set to that of the women's husbands, and only when the lover is a moran. After the performance of *eunoto* and *enkang' oo lorikan* there is no formal way in which a man can find out about his wives' sexual liaisons.

There is one other occasion when an informal accusation may be made and this is after a woman gives birth to a stillborn child. If it is thought that the stillbirth was caused by the woman being involved in a sexual relationship while she was pregnant the women form a mob as *olkishoroto* and may attack both the woman and her lover, thus enabling a man to discover who is his wife's lover. But these cases have no direct relevance to the age-set differences between a woman's husband and her lover and the performance of *olkishoroto* is actually uncommon. Thus the public occasions when it is possible to identify a person's lover and so claim a case of "adultery" are rare.

To reiterate, while men may state a precise set of principles as to whom one can legitimately have as a lover, neither men nor women take a great deal of notice of these "rules" in their own relationships. For every woman who is involved in a relationship that is not approved of, there is also a man in the same position. I discuss the reasons why people tolerate most such relationships in Chapter 7. It will also become clear why the one area where people show concern over these relationships is in the case of married women liaising with the moran.

Polygamy is common in *IlOitai* as elsewhere in Maasailand. Figures have been published by Llewelyn-Davies (1978: 219), Jacobs (1965: 208) and Spencer (1988: 26) relating to the numbers of wives elders have by their age-set. These figures can be high. This is illustrated by the example cited by Jacobs (1965: 208) of an elder who had 9 wives, and of another case cited by Llewelyn-Davies (1981: 338) of a man of *oloonkidong'i* sub-clan, who, in his seventies, had just taken his fourteenth wife. But large numbers of wives are the exception rather than the norm. From a limited sample taken in the Ilkerin area there was one example of a man with 5 wives, one with 4 wives, several with 3 wives; and while 2 wives was not uncommon and definitely the preferred option of the men, the mode was a single wife (Table 7). According to Spencer's (1988) data for *IlMatapato*, men in their

late twenties and thirties are unlikely to have more than one wife, while men in their late fifties and sixties average almost two wives each. Llewelyn-Davies' (1978) data, which give very high figures of polygamy, are probably atypical of the Maasai in general because they come from *oloonkidong'i* sub-clan where both wives and wealth can be accumulated as a result of the men's activities as ritual experts.

		No. of Wives						
Approx. age	**Age-set or age-group**	**0**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**Mean**
75+	*IlTareto*	0	1	2	0	0	0	1.66
61-75	*IlTerito*	0	1	1	1	0	1	2.75
47-60	*IlNyang'gusi*	0	2	2	0	0	0	1.50
33-46	*IlDeregaiyani**	0	8	6	1	1	0	1.50
26-32	*IlKiseeya*	2	2	0	0	0	0	0.50
19-25	*IRaantai#*	7	0	0	0	0	0	0.00

Table 7. Numbers of wives for members of different age-sets and age-groups. (* firestick elders; # *eunoto* in 1980)

The practice of polygamy in a pastoral society like the Maasai has both advantages and disadvantages. For example, while men may desire to have more than one wife this ambition is in direct conflict with a wife's own best interests. A single wife will milk not just the animals of her allotted herd but also the milch cows of her husband's residual herd that are in *enkang'*. Although technically this remains the right of the first wife no matter how many wives a man has, the milking of the residual herd is often shared between wives. This means that with the arrival of each new wife the first wife has fewer animals to milk.

On the other hand the arrival of a new wife may mean the sharing of the domestic work-load, although this is only likely to be significant in the period before a new wife has built her own house and established her own household. For a woman who is childless a co-wife is often an advantage because the adoption of children most frequently occurs between co-wives.

But there is always the potential for a conflict to arise between what a man may desire and what a wife may see as important with regard to potential future co-wives. The outside pressures placed on a man to

conform with a desired set of norms may not be viewed by the women as in the best interests of the household. In one case at *enkang' empaash*, a man of *IlTerito* age-set wished to take a second wife. He came under pressure from his wife and her mother, a daughter and also a daughter-in-law, who all opposed the idea. A compromise was reached and the second marriage of his eldest son was arranged instead. In this way, the women argued, there would be an additional woman to look after the eldest son's animals (his other wife stayed where he worked) without there being a long-term drain on the father's herd. Three of the four women involved in the wrangle would also benefit from the fact that the new set of affines would be those of the man's son. In these three cases their own interests lay with the father's herd rather than the son's.

On the other hand, the more wives that a man has the greater his potential network of associates. This is because of the clan system. Every person is born as a member of a clan, or *olgilata* (pl. *ilgilat*), that is traced through the father. Clan membership provides the basis of the principles of exogamy: one cannot marry someone from the same clan as oneself. A man is also not meant to marry two women from the same clan. There are six clans and these occur across the various sections of the Maasai, in the same way as the age-sets. This means that, as Jacobs (1965: 208) points out, if a man has five wives he would technically "have kinship ties" with every other Maasai. But, except with regard to principles of exogamy, clans tend to play a peripheral role in *IlOitai* social existence. Spencer (1988: 19) suggests that clans are important when an individual moves to a new area where there are no close associates.[18] In this instance a man may seek out fellow clansmen for support. In one known case at Ilkerin a woman sought assistance from a clansman while her husband was away for several weeks but this was an unusual occurrence. For *IlOitai* of the Ilkerin area the main significance of clans appears to be in their defining appropriate marriage partners.

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[18]. This marks an interesting contrast between the Maasai and the Samburu. Amongst the Samburu the clans form the basis for ownership of cattle, the establishment of alliances (Spencer 1973: 77) and a sense of community (Spencer 1988: 36). For the Maasai the clans play no such major role. Age-sets are the source of many alliances but exchange of cattle depends on a variety of relationships (see Chapter 7) and a sense of community derives from being physically close to others, regardless of clan or set membership. Thus while both societies have the same categorical forms of age-sets and clans, Maasai men emphasise the former while Samburu men emphasise the latter in the network of relationships they have with others.

Marriage is therefore an important means by which individuals build up alliances in the pastoral economy. But marriage is not only about creating alliances: it is also about having an heir for one's herds. While there is no sense of lineage development outside *oloonkidong'i* sub-clan, descendants are still the source of social continuity. The significance of male descendants is exemplified by the practice of *entito e nkang'* (lit. 'girl of the village'), called by Llewelyn-Davies (1976; 1981: 341) "daughters of the village". A man may choose to keep a daughter at home, rather than have her married, if he has no male descendants. In this way he acquires male descendants through the children that his daughter bears. Llewelyn-Davies (1976), in a survey of 149 circumcised women at Kisokon (the home territory of *oloonkidong'i* sub-clan), found that nearly 9 per cent of the women (fifteen in number) were "daughters of the village". I knew of only two cases in the Ilkerin area but these were also the only families without male heirs. The practice is therefore a common feature of the kinship system and ensures that a married man has a son who can inherit his herds.

3.4 The Kinship System

The Maasai kinship system is one of a number found around the world that has a series of labels for kin that are teknonyms (Geertz & Geertz 1964; Kaplan 1972; Needham 1954; Wilder 1975). There is also a system of descent terms. In both systems, a person is identified by reference to another generation. While neither of these systems comprises a large number of terms, they are both used frequently when addressing or referring to people (Table 8).

A teknonym is a term, of either address or reference, that specifies the person being talked about through the generation below that of themselves. The most commonly found ways of doing this are by referring to an individual either as the mother or father of a particular person. Some systems are more complex than this with parents being referred to according to the birth order of their children, rather than by the name of the child (Geertz & Geertz 1964; Needham 1954; Wilder 1975). The teknonymic forms used by *IlOitai* are:

Menye Siparo	Father (of) Siparo;
Ng'oto Nenkai	Mother (of) Nenkai;
Koko Moiyaso	Grandmother (of) Moiyaso.

I should say something here about using the term *koko*. *Koko* is often used by small children as if it were a life cycle stage term, and it may also be used in an affinal context. For example, a future grandmother-in-law at *enkang' empaash* was called by the man marrying her granddaughter '*Koko ai*'. This suggests that age and status may be as significant as is any kinship link based on an agnatic relationship in the use of this term. In addition, young children often confound generations in their use of *Koko* and call someone *Koko* Moiyaso say, when the woman concerned is actually the mother of Moiyaso but of *entasat* status. *Koko* is also often used for a woman who is a greatgrandmother (see below).

Terms of address and reference for female kin	**Approximate English equivalent**		**Terms of address and reference for male kin**
entito ai (pl. *intoyie aainei*)	daughter	son	*olayioni ai* (pl. *ilayiok laainei*)
enkanashe (pl. *inkanashera*)	sister	brother	*olalashe* (pl. *ilalashera*)
yieyio	mother	father	*papa*
enkitok ai (pl. *inkituaak aainei*) or *entomononi ai* (pl. *intomonok aainei*)	wife	husband	*olpayian lai*
koko	grandmother	grandfather	*nkakuyiaa*
enkaputani (pl. *inkaputak*)	female affine	male affine	*olaputani* (pl. *ilaputak*)
Teknonyms below			
Ng'oto ...	Mother (of) ...	Father (of) ...	*Menye* ...
Koko ...	Grandmother (of) ...		
Patronyms below			
		Son (of) ...	*Ole* ...
		Son (of) the son (of) ...	*Ol(e) ole* ...
Enole ...	Wife (of) the son (of) ...		

Table 8. *IlOitai* kinship terms.

The second system of terms is what might be called 'descent' terms, or what Jacobs (1965: 216) has described as "patronymy". These refer to a person through the generation above that of themselves. These terms can be summarised as follows:

Ole Kashu	Son (of) Kashu;
Ol(e) ole Leken	Son (of) the son (of) Leken;
Enole Samperu	Wife (of) the son (of) Samperu.[19]

The most frequently used of these terms is *Ole*. It is commonly used to both address and refer to a man. In some instances *Ole* is used collapsing the generations so that someone called *Ole* Kashu may actually be the grandson of Kashu. This happens only if Kashu is alive and people commonly use it when referring to where someone lives. For example, to say *'enkang' Ole* Kashu' could be translated as 'the home of *Ole* Kashu and of all his relatives who are living at the same place' and may be given in response to a question about one of *Ole* Kashu's sons or grandsons rathe than *Ole* Kashu himself.

People use the other two forms of patronymy less commonly. *Ol(e) ole* tends only to be used when someone is trying to identify an individual. This would occur if two men met for the first time and were unable to identify the father of each other. When this occurs the men may specify who their grandfather is in order to clarify the situation. Even less frequently used is the term *Enole* which is only used in reference. For example, a woman will respond to the question 'Who are you?' from a stranger with '*Enole* Samperu'. This descent term appears to have developed in response to the demands of an outside administration which insists on precise data about an individual's identity.

Teknonyms and patronyms are used in different ways for men and women. For instance, people most commonly address or refer to a man as '*Ole* ...'. However there is a tendency for women to address men as '*Menye* ...'. On the other hand women are usually addressed as '*Ng'oto* ...'. Thus, in practice, women tend to be identified through their descendants while men are identified through their ancestors. It should also be noted that although other researchers with the Maasai have suggested that teknonyms are based on the last born child of a woman this is not the case amongst *IlOitai* (Jacobs 1965: 216; Spencer 1988: 42). In using '*Menye* ...' and '*Ng'oto* ...' any living child's name may be used.

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19. Note that Mol (n.d.: 52) includes '*Ene* ...' for 'Daughter of ...' in his list of descent terms. The use of this term is described by *IlOitai* as being insulting to the person to whom it refers. It is therefore rarely used.

This usage contrasts with that found amongst the Balinese. In Bali both parents mutually and simultaneously hold the name of a particular child (Geertz & Geertz 1964: 96). This identification of a man and a woman with a particular child stresses the bond between the husband and the wife. While in principle the same is possible amongst *IlOitai* practice shows this not to be the case. Although the use of teknonymy amongst *IlOitai* could potentially stress the bond between husband and wife, common usage tends to treat each partner as an individual on the basis of different aspects of their genealogical position: men are recognised through links of descent while women are recognised through links of maternity.

But both actions achieve the same ends. They break up any tendency in the kinship system towards socially identified lines of descent. The teknonyms and patronyms used by *IlOitai* are mostly for one generation either side of ego and there is a tendency to collapse generations where they might extend beyond this single generation. Thus the practice of genealogical amnesia means that kinship groups for *IlOitai* do not develop into lineages. Rather, as Jacobs (1965: 217) has noted, the "structural amnesia ... enables agnates to be fairly flexible in deciding exactly how closely they may be related by common descent". The lack of an agnatic core therefore increases the flexibility of the social system. People are not only forced to forge friendships outside those based on kinship in order to build up a network of associates but they must also recreate these links with every new generation.

The small number of teknonyms and patronyms used by *IlOitai*, reflects the limited number of kinship terms (Table 8). The kinship terms do not extend beyond the immediate, co-habiting family and are only three generations deep.[20] Once again it can be seen that one has to rely on some form of classification other than that of kinship in order to identify with, and relate to, an individual outside this close group of kin. I have discussed some of these methods already in this chapter and I consider a more comprehensive range of the possibilities in Chapter 7.

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20. There appears to be some discrepancy in the literature as to the kinship terms that the Maasai use and this may in part be due to sectional variations. For example, Mol (n.d.: 133) lists kinship terms such as: first born son (*olkikau*), co-wife (*enkaini*), and father's sister's husband (*osindani*). While *IlOitai* may use some of these terms to describe a relationship, they are not generally used as terms of address or reference between people. In fact their use is uncommon. The following discussion is limited to those terms which are in common use amongst *IlOitai*.

Two points should be made about the kinship terms found in *IlOitai* and their use. First, Llewelyn-Davies (1981: 337) has suggested that the life cycle terms *entito*, *olayioni*, *enkitok* (*entomononi*) and *olpayian* (*olmoruo*) are also kinship terms. This is not the case. These four terms only become kinship terms when they are combined with a first-person possessive in the following way:

Entito ai	My daughter (rather than 'my girl');
Olayioni lai	My son (rather than 'my boy');
Enkitok ai	My wife (rather than 'my woman');
Olpayian lai	My husband (rather than 'my man').

In these cases the addition of the first-person possessive transforms what would otherwise be a life cycle stage term into a kinship term. This is because the simple life cycle stage term of '*entito*' is depersonalised. But when it is used with a possessive the relationship becomes a personal one that can be interpreted as one of kinship. Thus, for example, while the literal translation of '*entito ai*' is 'my girl' the term is better understood as '(my) daughter' (Table 8).

Second, Jacobs (1965: 211-214; 1970: 30-31) describes two distinct types of affines. These are:

> "(i) those who actually participate in the establishment of the marriage tie; and
> (ii) those so-related mainly as a consequence of the marriage tie." (Jacobs 1970: 30-31)

The first group, called "*olaputani*", consists of the wife's father and full brother. The second group consists of a daughter's sons, the mother's brother/sister's sons and the mother's brother's son/father's sister's son who are all called "*apula*". Jacobs (1965: 211; 1970) distinguishes these two groups of affines into "first-degree" and "second-degree" affines, where "first-degree" affines are also "wife-givers".

The distinction Jacobs makes is between a set of "first-degree" affines who are involved in marriage arrangements, and all other relatives by marriage who make up the "second-degree" group. This suggests that *apula* may simply be a generalised term for affines. If this is the case then it would contain within its semantic field the specific terms used by *IlOitai* (Table 8). This would mean that *IlOitai* use of *enkaputani* (pl. *inkaputak*) and *olaputani* (pl. *ilaputak*) would correspond to Jacobs' group (i) of

affines. Thus the terms suggested by Jacobs can be reduced to a specific term for both male and female affines and then a generalised descriptive term for any affine that is equivalent to Jacobs' group (ii), or "second-degree" affines. Amongst *IlOitai*, both in cases of reference and address, it is the terms *enkaputani* and *olaputani* that one hears.

The paucity of kinship terms in *IlOitai* suggests that there are only a limited number of expected roles or behavioural patterns associated with kinship. There are also indicators that behavioural patterns based on age may play as significant a role, especially for the young, in the use of these terms as does the recognition of any kinship relationship. For example, it is not uncommon for young children to call any old woman (of *entasat* status) '*Koko*' or any old man (of *oltasat* status) '*Nkakuyiaa*' and these terms are often preferred to the equivalent life cycle stage term.[21] Grandchildren, or children who are unrelated to a woman, may also address her as '*Yieyio*' if she is well-known to them. These examples suggest that behaviour can be an important factor in the use of these terms, a point that has been made by other researchers (Bloch 1971; Bohannan 1963: 69-70; Cunnison 1959: 75).

The data on kinship indicates that *IlOitai* men and women have different orientations. For men, having an heir is most important and it is through the use of a patronym that these heirs refer to the source of their wealth, their fathers. For women it is fertility and offspring that are of central concern and this link between a mother and her children is continually reiterated through the use of teknonyms. But both teknonyms and patronyms ensure genealogical amnesia, a phenomenon that is associated with the absence of extended families. For men this lack of descent depth is replaced by the age-sets which provide a network of associates that stretches across Maasailand. For women no parallel network exists and they are largely dependent upon their offspring for support, whether they be sons or daughters (see Chapter 2).

In the section of this chapter on age-sets I pointed out that their role is only to mediate and exercise moral suasion. This process of mediation is

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21. Tucker & Ole Mpaayei (1955: 261) spell *koko* as *kokoo* and Mol (pers. comm.) considers *kokoo* to equal great grandmother. However there was no evidence for this usage in the Ilkerin area and no recognition of a third generation in *IlOitai* use of kinship terms (see preceding text). This compression of the third generation into the second generation supports the general observation made by Jacobs (1965: 217) that Maasai practise "genealogical amnesia".

usually confined to the local level and may be associated with the aggregation of age-mates in *enkang'*. Mediation is however different from judging cases and age-sets should not be seen as institutions of power. This is because age-sets do not control resources and cannot use control over resources as a means by which to coerce people to a particular point of view. In order to understand the political process amongst *IlOitai* it is therefore necessary to begin by looking at power before considering the role of influence.

CHAPTER FOUR
POWER

Arens and Karp (1989b: xx), in a discussion of power, have noted that for the Iteso of Kenya the English idea of power can be translated in three different ways: either as meaning ability or capacity (*apedor*), physical strength (*agogong*), or compliance (*abeiken*). They note that the same semantic fields exist in Maasai where there are words for ability (*aider* or *aidim*), physical strength (*engolon*) and control (*aitore*) (Arens and Karp 1989b: xx).[1] To this can be added *aitodol* which means "to point out" or "to allocate" (Llewelyn-Davies 1981: 333). Most importantly, none of these terms directly corresponds to the English semantic field covered by the term 'power'. Arens and Karp (1989b: xx-xxi) conclude that "once we incorporate semantics, cosmology, and action, power can be understood as something significantly more subtle and meaningful than sovereignty or domination isolated at one single point in time or place". Thus, to understand the political process in a society one needs to begin by looking at power.

In order to wield power one must first have access to, and control over, resources. Some authors have taken a broad definition of resources, recognising that they have to be desired by others before they can be used to exercise power. For example, Bell (1975: 82) talks of "valued objects" rather than resources. A valued object is one that "can be manipulated", "is valued by the respondent", "is in relatively short supply" and "is 'divisible'" (Bell 1975: 82). This use does not confine consideration to only material objects or labour. It can include other phenomena such as linguistic competence and emotional responses, as I shall elaborate later in this thesis. The important point is that it is only those resources or 'valued objects' that are socially perceived as desirable that can be used as a part of a system of power. These do not have to be tangible or quantifiable 'assets'. It is within this context that I discuss resources in this thesis.

Crucial to any consideration of resources as a potential source of power is the idea of ownership. In the literature it is usually implicitly

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[1]. Arens and Karp (1989b: xx), on the basis of a personal communication of Naomi Kipuri, give the verb *aider* as meaning ability. *Aidim* (to be able, capable) is the more commonly used term in the Loita area.

assumed that 'control' is the same as 'ownership' (Bonte 1981; de Pina-Cabral 1984; Hirschon 1984; Martin and Voorhies 1975). In the case of pastoralists this is often not the case. This chapter will therefore begin by considering the ideas of control and ownership for pastoral societies, and *Il Oitai* in particular.

4.1 Ownership and Control

Stock are the basis of subsistence in a pastoral society. Many therefore assume that ownership of stock is a crucial factor in deciding who has political control in the society. Amongst pastoralists ownership of stock is largely in the hands of the adult married men but women may also have some rights of ownership. For example, in Islamic societies women are entitled to inherit a half share of that inherited by their brothers. Often this right is not exercised and the animals are held by a woman's brothers (Asad 1970; Barion 1987; Cunnison 1966; Dahl 1979; Ensminger 1987). But, as Mohsen (1967) suggests for the Awlad 'Ali of Egypt, the forfeiture of this right of ownership to one's brothers can be used as a means by which to obtain support from agnates in disputes with one's affines. Thus in cases where women have the right to inherit animals but do not take up the option they are still able to use this right as a means to gain support, and so influence the course of events.

In some non-Islamic societies women may have no rights of ownership in animals (Dyson-Hudson 1966; Elam 1973). In others they may hold major rights of ownership (Klima 1964; Oxby 1987; Watson-Franke 1987). There is therefore no simple way of describing the relationship between women and the ownership of stock in pastoral societies. However in those cases where women actively take up their ownership rights in livestock they clearly wield substantial power in the society (Klima 1964; Oxby 1987; Watson-Franke 1987).

I have suggested that control over resources is a different matter to ownership. Often women have some control over stock even if they cannot own them. This control usually involves a woman holding in trust the animals that her sons will inherit when they are adults (Barth 1961; Dahl 1979; Fazel 1977). This is the system found amongst the Maasai. Even where women may not have control over a part of the family herd they are usually the custodians of the produce from the herds (Beaman 1983; Dupire

1971; Gulliver 1955; Oxby 1986). The Hima of Uganda are an exception to this principle, with women being actively excluded from having anything to do with the animals, including the milking of them (Elam 1973). Elam (1973: xv) says that the practice is based on the belief that "the reproductive functions of women are a danger to those of cattle".

These examples show that it is not possible to generalise about ownership of stock in pastoral societies. Often it is also not easy to *define* ownership of livestock. This is because the theoretical and actual control of individual animals may be quite different. The Wodaabe (Dupire 1971) of Niger illustrate this well. Dupire lists a range of criteria regarding cattle in terms of who looks after the animals, who is able to alienate the animals, and who inherits the animals. All these factors involve a number of people who each have some degree of control over any single animal. The Wodaabe case shows that while one may be able to distinguish jural rights over animals easily these rights may not be sufficient to tell one who actually controls or manages particular animals. What is important in such cases is that where the ownership or control over animals is ambiguous or complex, the fate of the animals can be negotiated between those who hold an interest in them.

Ownership is not the only area where difficulties arise over defining the control of animals. Herding is another (cf. Dahl 1987: 258). In many African pastoral societies most of the herding is *not* done by the men who own the animals but rather by their sons and their friends' or neighbours' sons. In the case of the Maasai, for instance, boys do most of the herding but girls may also herd the small stock. Those involved in herding should not be ignored in any reckoning of who has control over animals. This is because any individual who is involved in herding has the ability to influence events through the withholding of their labour.

Animal husbandry is another area where influence may be exerted. The herding and husbandry in a pastoral society are not necessarily done by the same individuals. Often it is the boys who do the bulk of the herding while it is the women and young girls who care of young and sick animals.

All these factors suggest that the ownership and control over animals should be looked at in detail for each particular pastoral society before generalisations are made about the relationship between resources and the exercise of power.

It has been largely accepted in the literature on the Maasai that power relates to access to resources and that resources are largely in the control of the adult married men. Despite the obvious conclusion, therefore, that women (and also moran) ought to be powerless in Maasai society because they do not control resources, there is some disagreement in the literature as to just how powerful Maasai women are. The views range from seeing women as being completely powerless, because they have no control over resources, to the view that they show some independence but are subordinate to men. For example, Jacobs (1965: 296) says "women ... are regarded by Masai as non-political persons" and "their tribal membership is generally unimportant", and Spencer (1988: 277) says that "the Maasai ideal loses sight of women, who normally have a subservient role as domestic commodities".

Spencer's own data contradict his conclusion. They show, for instance, that women play a crucial role "in relation to the domestication of moran into elderhood" (1988: 277) and that they act as upholders of moral principles, especially in relation to fertility. This suggests that to view power only in terms of resources in the material sense is limiting. For example, this case can be compared with Klima's (1964) description of the Barabaig. Klima reaches the conclusion that Barabaig women are quite powerful and that this is partially because they have substantial, unalienable rights in livestock. But he also remarks that the women play a substantial role in ritual activities which men acknowledge as being "essential for the welfare of the general society in times of disease, epidemic, and drought" and that this is a contributing factor to their "high" status (Klima 1964: 13). The implication is that the 'labour' of women in a ritual context can be as crucial to the social reproduction of a society as it is in the accepted, functional context of food production. Spencer's material on the Maasai suggests that the significance of women in the ritual context, especially in those rituals associated with the formation of an age-set, provide a potential power base for women, and I shall return to this issue below and in Chapter 5.

Llewelyn-Davies (1978; 1981) presents another view of Maasai women. She suggests that women and moran are equal and subordinate to adult male elders.[2] The justification for this view is that both groups are

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2. Spencer (1988) also compares the similar situations of the moran and women in Maasai society but summarises it in the dichotomy of:

excluded from ownership in livestock. This is a misleading comparison because the idea of an equivalence between moran and women is based on a false premise, as I showed in Chapter 3. It also implies that neither group owns stock. While this might be the case, moran know they will ultimately inherit livestock whereas women know they will not. The anticipated future role of moran therefore needs to be taken into consideration when one is looking at the ownership of stock.

But it is not only during moranhood that males are unable to control their allotted herds. At the end of moranhood the young men, even after they marry, do not automatically gain control over their animals. It may be several years before a father is willing to hand control over to his sons. In this way a father may hope to control the actions of his sons by delaying their right of ownership in cattle.

From the discussion in Chapter 3 it can be seen that this is a crucial time in a man's life because if he has control over his allotted herd he can become involved in the trading of animals. This not only increases the size of his herd but is also an important factor in the development of group solidarity. At this stage in the developmental cycle there is the potential for conflict to arise between father and son. Because women are the ones who hold the allotted herd in trust for their sons, they can play a crucial role when such conflicts arise.

Llewelyn-Davies uses a myth women tell about their loss of control over livestock (1978: 215) to substantiate her view that women hold an inferior status to that of men. In the myth women lose control over the wild animals that are their livestock because they allow their children to stay home to eat meat rather than go herding. The implication of the myth is that women place more importance on their children than their animals. The result is an image of the relative status of men and women in Maasai society that can be summarised as:

men : livestock :: women : children

where men care for cattle (and other stock) while women care for children (Llewelyn-Davies 1978: 208, 215-216).

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diehards : cattle :: virago wives : children

where diehards are a "crack force" of moran (p. 125) and virago wives are those who partake in women's ritual mobbings. This can be compared to the dichotomy which Llewelyn-Davies proposes, outlined below.

Talle (1987; 1988), on the other hand, suggests that although women are subordinate to men they "enjoy a great deal of autonomy in domestic affairs and in the economy of the family" (1987: 52). This she argues on the grounds that the women have extensive rights in sections of the family herds, and because they manage their houses and the domestic domain.

These different views show that the situation regarding the distribution of power in Maasai society, especially with regard to the women and the moran, is more complex than it might at first appear. A crucial factor in this debate over power is access to resources. For example, if women have some control over resources then they are potentially powerful. I shall now look at this issue more closely.

Several authors have stated that Maasai women are not able to own stock (Jacobs 1965; Llewelyn-Davies 1978, 1981; Spencer 1988; Talle 1987, 1988). However there are a limited number of situations in which women can be the recipients of 'gifts' of stock. For instance, there is the sheep that a son-in-law gives his mother-in-law on his marriage. This establishes a relationship between the two where the reciprocal term of address '*Paker*' ('One of the sheep') is used (see Chapter 7). Gifts of this form may also exist between a man and other female affines and agnates, where the gift-giving is usually associated with marriage (Jacobs n.d.: 36; Spencer 1988: 31, 37, fn. 4). Another occasion on which a woman may receive an animal is at her circumcision. A father promises his daughter a cow if she does not cry out at her circumcision. This is a rare occurrence because of the nature of female circumcision but it does occasionally happen. Unfortunately, in the one instance where it occurred at Ilkerin during the fieldwork the girl's father had no animals and so the promise was not fulfilled (cf. Talle 1987: 67, but she does not give any concrete examples). Talle (1988: 88 fn. 1) also suggests that women are able to exchange donkeys which would imply that they can own them and I have some evidence for women exchanging sheep. These examples suggest that in theory women are not totally excluded from stock ownership but that the size of any herd a woman might own would be very small (cf. Beaman 1983).

More important are the usufruct rights that women hold in animals. As Talle (1987: 72) puts it, this involves more than milking rights and implies the right to "allocate animals to members of the agnatic family as

well as to request negotiations on behalf of sons". Not only does this mean that women allocate the animals in their control to their sons, but it also means that women are able to hold back animals for their personal subsistence needs in old age. What a woman is not able to do is to dispose of any animal as she wishes.

One woman in *enkang' empaash* (Fig. 2, House 1) had been a second wife and only borne daughters. Theoretically if a woman has no sons, her co-wives' sons will inherit the animals (see Llewelyn-Davies 1981: 340; Spencer 1988: 243 and Talle 1987: 60). However in this particular case the woman had retained a small milch herd for herself. Her animals produced more than enough for her own needs and she regularly fed a number of her grandchildren. In her old age she had attached herself to her eldest son-in-law whose family provided the labour for the herding of her animals. It appeared that he would take full control of the animals when she died. But in the meantime, and despite comments to the contrary by the son-in-law, it was not possible for him to treat these animals as though he owned them. This was because the woman could always attach herself to her other daughter's affines if she became unhappy with his management of the animals. While this eventuality was unlikely (the other son-in-law was not a very successful pastoralist) it always remained a possibility and deterred the son-in-law from mismanaging her herd or ill-treating her.

Usufruct rights in animals affect the control and distribution of livestock throughout *IlOitai*. Today *IlOitai* distribute animals by moving them to stay with relatives and friends, rather than according to the traditional system of transhumance. This means that one man's animals may be divided between several people and obviously the larger the herd the more likely this will be, and the more extensive the subdivision of the herd. Thus *IlOitai* extensively utilise usufruct rights because the lending of animals to others is a major factor in the current system of pastoral management. This means that in many cases it is usufruct rather than jural rights that are being exercised in an animal.

Occasionally cattle may also be moved with women. For instance, *Ng'oto* Nalarri (Chapter 3, p. 76) was given animals by her father to take with her for her subsistence needs on her second marriage. This ensured that she had her own animals to milk even though they effectively became the property of her husband.

The point at which an usufruct right in an animal becomes a jural right can also be hard to distinguish. Talle (1987: 71), for instance, states that the "characteristic of a family herd is that property rights to the individual animals are particularistic and diversified: several people may hold various rights to the same animal at the same time, necessitating negotiations between the family members whenever an animal is going to be disposed of" (and cf. Dupire 1971). This suggests that even where women cannot formally own animals the interests they have concerning those animals that they milk and care for cannot be completely overlooked. The usufruct rights that women hold in animals are therefore an important means by which women can influence the course of events (Talle 1987, 1988).

To limit a discussion of control, and consequently power, in *IlOitai* society to stock would provide a misleading impression. For example, married women can achieve desired ends by either withdrawing their labour or by limiting access to the resources over which they do have control: women can deny a husband food, refuse to milk the cows, or move away from the home. In many cases access to resources and labour are interrelated. For example, women, on a day-to-day basis, do the milking and distribute the milk products. It is their labour that therefore provides the resources over which they have control. Both milk and beer are resources that women can manipulate. The following example illustrates how women manipulate the products that they control:

EPISODE 4.

> It was a hot day and *Papa* came into Maitukaiya's house at midday looking for some milk to drink. Maitukaiya said that there was none because it had all been given to the children in the morning. *Papa* asked about tea and Maitukaiya said that there was not even enough milk left to make tea as the cows were not producing very much milk at the moment. *Papa* tut-tutted about this sad state of affairs, left the house and spent the afternoon sleeping under a tree *auluo*. Later in the afternoon, when *Papa* had gone to locate the animals on their way home, *Ole* Sipei (Maitukaiya's lover) came into the house and Maitukaiya produced a large mug of milk for him to drink. He drank it, said thank you, and left before *Papa* returned with the cows.

In this Episode because Maitukaiya had control over the milk from the animals in her allotted herd she was able to distribute it in the way she wished. She refused her husband milk and kept what she had for her lover.

In the same way as women control the milk produced by the herds, it is the women who control the brewing of the beer. Beer, like meat, is an essential component of nearly all Maasai ceremonies. Hospitality is an extremely important component of Maasai society and it is not unusual to hear of individuals being described as miserly (verb = *apiak* - to be mean, stingy), or of a ceremony as being bad, because there was not enough beer and meat for the guests. The brewing of beer and its distribution is as open to manipulation as is the distribution of milk. Maitukaiya, for instance, always tried to have a brew of beer ready for *Papa*'s return from a trip around *IlOitai* visiting his age-mates. She perceived this as an important aspect of her relationship with *Papa* and it displayed an attentiveness to *Papa*'s needs (cf. Episode 3, Chapter 3, pp. 72-73).

The women's involvement in ritual events, even where they are primarily bound up with the age-sets, is more important than has often been suggested. For example, not only do the women brew the beer for such events but as mothers they have a substantial symbolic role to play. It is as mothers or wives that women shave the heads of those involved in rituals and it is the women who build the ritual villages, *imanyat*, in which the major age-set rituals take place. An example of what happened in a family where the eldest son was about to be circumcised and the mother had left home illustrates the importance of women in the ritual process:

EPISODE 5.

> When the new age-group was formed *Ole* Karkar's eldest son was due to be circumcised. His mother, who had argued with her husband, was *IlDamat* and had left to return to the home of her parents. As the time approached for the circumcision to take place, *Ole* Karkar went to *IlDamat* in search of his wife. When he found her he begged her to return to their home at least for her son's circumcision. She agreed to do so and returned to Ilkerin and helped arrange the ceremony. She brewed beer for the circumcision and all went well at the ceremony. After the ritual had taken place she stayed at Ilkerin for a short time while her son convalesced and then went back to her parents' home.

There are other potential ways in which women can gain access to resources. For example, women may earn money from a variety of

activities. In the Ilkerin area the options open to the women were: selling milk, making and selling beadwork at the development project, or brewing and selling beer. Women then kept the money that they earned in this fashion and usually spent it on food for their families.[3]

These examples show that Maasai women are not the completely powerless individuals in society that some authors have suggested. In fact they manipulate a variety of resources that are at their disposal. *Koko* once said that part of a woman's success in maintaining a good 'working relationship' with her husband was through providing adequately for him. This suggests that a woman who understands how the system works and who utilises the resources available to her with care can place herself in a powerful position and use the system to her own advantage. If this is the case then the crucial determinant, as to whether women are powerful or not in Maasai, is the personality of the individual. The validity of this can be tested by considering the case of women whose husbands have died.

Because the age differences between husbands and wives are usually in the order of several years it is not unusual for a man to die several years before his wife or wives. At *enkang' empaash*, for instance, widows occupied six out of the 16 houses (Fig. 3). In none of these cases was a brother of the dead man clearly in evidence and controlling the herds. Rather the women would work together with sons or sons-in-law to maintain the herds. However there is a very unstable period between a husband's death and the time when a son is able to take over responsibility for the herds. This is when other relatives may try and move in to take control. It is at this stage of the developmental cycle of a household that the personality of the mother is crucial. If the woman has shown herself to be responsible then it is difficult for someone from outside the immediate household to exploit the family's resources.

This can be illustrated with the example of two women who lived in the Ilkerin area and whose husbands had died. Both were only wives and had no circumcised sons when their husbands died. The eldest children of both the women were married daughters. Despite these similarities the ensuing fortunes of the two families were completely different.

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3. Dupire (1971) has noted the same practice amongst the Wodaabe where women have some economic independence as a result of being able to sell the produce for which they are responsible. In the Wodaabe case the women often reinvest their money in small stock.

In the first example, *Ng'oto* Pamet (Fig. 2, House 16) managed to maintain control of her herd without outside intervention. She was the only woman in *enkang' empaash* who regularly herded the small stock if there was a shortage of labour. While she still had to run a household and had only one young daughter at home to help with fetching water, plastering the roof, looking after the very young animals and children, if the need was there then she would go out herding. As a result, her eldest son followed a normal life cycle pattern and was circumcised and went through *eunoto* in 1980 with his peers of *IRaantai* age-group.

At the time of the fieldwork, the son and some friends had become heavily involved in cattle trading to increase the size of their herds. They would make regular trips to *Encore Emuny* for this purpose. This meant that the son was often away from home. At such times *Ng'oto* Pamet looked after the herd and relied on a younger son to do the herding and on the assistance of her mother if there was an emergency. The mother lived 10 to 15 km away but would come and stay with the family for weeks at a time assisting with the household tasks. In late 1982 *Ng'oto* Pamet was in the process of building a new house in *enkang'* of one of her lovers. It is possible that in part *Ng'oto* Pamet had managed to remain independent in the past through the manipulation of lovers, of which she had several.

In the second example, when the husband died his brother, who lived in the same *enkang'*, took over responsibility of the herd. In this case control of the herd had amounted to dispossession. As a result the eldest son had become completely preoccupied with re-establishing the family herd and had little time for anything else. At the time of the fieldwork the eldest son (also of *IRaantai*), who had been refused early circumcision and premature elderhood so that he could take control of the herd, was working at the development project. In this way he intended to buy goats with the money he earned and thus move back into the pastoral economy. In contrast to the other woman's son, his time was spent in re-establishing a herd rather than the more usual task for that stage of a male's life of building up and reinforcing a set of links with age-mates based on trading. His lack of animals also meant that he could not build up a series of stock associations. Both these factors would put him at a disadvantage in his later life when he may wish to call upon these links in order to maintain himself as a successful pastoralist.

In these two cases the character of the two women was quite different. There are women in Maasailand, just as there are men, who have a strong sense of the appropriate behaviour for someone who is Maasai. Such individuals often become involved in any debate of issues that extends beyond the household. People will seek out the opinions of such people as a standard part of the discussion of an issue. People often express this esteem for older women and men but there are also some younger individuals who have a reputation for giving sound advice. *Ng'oto* Pamet was just such a woman who had earned the respect (*enkanyit*) of others. The fact that *Ng'oto* Pamet placed the welfare of the animals and her family beforeall else could have contributed to this respect.

Ng'oto Tajewo was quite different. She was very giggly and spent a lot of time visiting other *inkang'itie*, instead of concentrating her energies on the maintenance of her household. She seemed unperturbed by the effective loss of the family's herd. She drank more than most women and was generally seen as being irresponsible. It seemed likely that if she had commanded more respect then her family could have avoided the disaster that had befallen them, or at least they would have been treated more sympathetically by others. Past political moves against her brother-in-law had been unsuccessful and the situation seemed unlikely to alter in the near future. The general consensus of feeling was that the excesses of her husband's brother should be curtailed but no one seemed willing to move against him, including his age-mates.

The examples given above of the different fortunes of two families where the husband had died show that talking of ownership of stock without also considering control is of limited use in understanding the social dynamics of *IlOitai* society. Before the discussion on the idea of control versus ownership can be closed one further matter needs to be considered. This is the need to reassess the discussion of the Maasai verb *aitore* (to command, control, rule) that has taken place in the literature (Jacobs 1965; Llewelyn-Davies 1981; Spencer 1977; Talle 1987, 1988).

4.2 *Aitore*

Llewelyn-Davies (1981) has particularly emphasised the significance of the idea of *aitore* in relationships and has used it to support her argument that women are subordinate to men. She contrasts *aitore* with

the verb *aitodol* (to show, point out, allocate) which she suggests describes "the limited rights in a domestic animal, such as milking rights or rights to its eventual inheritance" (1981: 333) the former being the right of women, and the latter being the right of young men. However Talle (1988: 74) has suggested that Llewelyn-Davies' discussion of the meaning and use of the verb *aitore* is too rigid to be very useful. Talle adds that to consider material goods, livestock and humans as if they were all the same is to miss the point and that the categories need to be treated differently. For instance, livestock and women cannot be treated as 'property' in the same way: livestock can be sold, but the marriage of women is part of a transaction that involves obligations on the part of both parties. Talle (1988: 75) concludes that "it is dubious whether *aitore* may be translated into concepts of ownership and property" because while a married man may "sell an animal from the herd without consulting the other family members, beat a disobedient wife or force a daughter to marry a man of his own choice ... it is important to note that the privileges are not exercised indiscriminately and without the risk of sanctions being implemented" (1988: 75-76).

If the meaning of *aitore* was solely about control over commodities then the alienation of items would be an uncomplicated matter. But this is not the case. Talle (1988: 76) states, for example, that "although gift-giving and livestock exchanges to a great extent are obligatory, they are nevertheless founded on an assumption of willingness and on the cultural value of generosity". Spencer (1977: 4) has also stated that to translate *aitore* as 'control' and 'authority' is misleading and that the idea of control is "fraught with ambiguity".

In addition, Llewelyn-Davies' (1981) belief that men control female sexuality and labour is problematic. For example, as I shall show in Chapter 6, when women withdraw their labour from the household the repercussions are potentially disastrous. With regard to sexuality, I shall show in Chapter 7 that women are unlikely to be coerced into liaisons that they do not desire. In fact a woman's sexuality is a powerful means by which women are able to achieve desired ends. It is often through lovers that women are able to look after their families' welfare better than they

could otherwise do when the family is poor or where a husband behaves in an irresponsible manner.[4]

To consider Maasai women as being second class citizens in their own society is therefore to misinterpret the evidence. Because women and men have different interests in different resources it is not a simple case of men being able to wield power over women. Rather, the political process in *IlOitai* recognises the potential for the use of forceful political techniques but people often make the choice not to use them. People recognise, and have experienced or been told of, the problems in using forceful politics. Instances like the fight between the two brothers at *enkang' empaash* (see Chapter 2 and Episode 10, Chapter 6), that led to the break up of two family units, are common enough for people to be aware that by using forceful political techniques a dispute can escalate into conflict, and possibly violence. *IlOitai* prefer to use techniques based on influence. In this way people know that it is possible to convince others of the validity of a point of view without there being the potential for the situation to get out of control and escalate into physical violence.

The one area of *IlOitai* and Maasai social existence where the use of influential political techniques seems least likely to hold is in the functioning of the age-set system. In order to investigate this possibility I shall now consider the age-sets in some detail.

4.3 Age-Sets

I have already stated that opinion varies on the nature of age-sets in East African societies. Baxter (1988: 595), for instance, summarises the position of Baxter and Almagor (1978) by saying that because age-sets do not control resources they cannot therefore wield power. He believes that it is their ritual role that people perceive as providing benefits to a society. Bernardi (1985: 29), on the other hand, says that age-sets "attempt to create order for legitimising and distributing power, both potentially and effectively". Bernardi's view is that age-sets structure adult male time so that at some point in the life cycle of each man he will fulfil a particular sort

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[4]. This is not to say that there is no sexual attraction between lovers, but rather to point out the other possibilities of such relationships. Many lover relationships exist solely because the two individuals involved like each other.

of role - economic, political or ritual - as a result of membership in a set.[5] He (1985: 30) adds: "In assuring everyone the same rights of participation, the distributive character of age class systems guarantees the social equality of all members of the society".[6] Bernardi also distinguishes between potential and effective rights, where each male has the potential, as a result of moving through the system with time, to exercise all the *effective* rights that relate to age-set membership. In this way he (1985: 30) is able to argue that "the view that presupposes that the elders, as natural leaders, exercise the authority" is not true. In so doing he is effectively rejecting the idea that an age-set system may function as a gerontocracy.

Age-sets have often been described in the literature as gerontocracies. Spencer (1965), for instance, has found it a useful concept in his study of age-sets amongst the Samburu. Spencer (1965: 315) states that a "gerontocracy in its broadest sense is a society where an inordinate amount of power is vested in the older men, whether this is marriage or other privileges". In the case of the Samburu Spencer believes the society to be gerontocratic because the rate of polygamy is high among older men. Young men are refused the right to marry and as a result there exists a tension between young and old men. Spencer (1976) later extended this argument in a comparative analysis of the Samburu, Arusha and Maasai. He came to the conclusion that whereas for the Samburu women are the crucial scarce resource, in the case of the Arusha the crucial scarce resource is land. He (1976: 165) adds "the crucial difference is that whereas in both societies the age organisation curbs resort to violence, only among the Samburu is it directly associated with the maintenance of scarcity and hence a prime source of tension as well as an ultimate check". On the basis of the data available at the time, he (1976: 169) says of the Maasai that "there appears to be a situation in which competition among the Masai moran - over girls, stock and privileges - diverts their attention and indirectly confirms their consent in a gerontocratic regime which is

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5. A specialisation of roles with the progression of an age-set through time is characteristic of a system where there are recognised age-grades. This was discussed in Chapter 3 and does not hold true of the Maasai. Bernardi (1985), however, believes that the Maasai fit into this type of age-set structure.

6. By "everyone" Bernardi means 'all males'. This is a common ellison, and hence confusion, of categories found in discussions on age-sets.

based on more fundamental privileges". He adds that this makes for an ambiguous relationship between moran and elders.

A major difference between the Maasai and the Samburu, however, lies in the existence of separate villages for Maasai moran. This means that for the Maasai there is a spatial separation which helps to alleviate tensions between moran and elders at the time when they are most likely to occur. Spencer (1976) reaches the conclusion that not all age organisations are gerontocracies and suggests that the Sonjo and Boran are two obvious exceptions.

Following his fieldwork with *IlMatapato*, Spencer (1988: Chapter 13) reached the conclusion that for *IlMatapato* the emphasis is on paternal control, rather than the gerontocratic control of an age-set.

One other useful example of an age-system being described in gerontocratic terms is that of Almagor's (1978) discussion of the Dassanetch. Almagor (1978: 140) makes a distinction between two types of gerontocratic system which he describes as "ascriptive gerontocracy" where power goes with a particular age-grade position (e.g. the Samburu) and "achieved gerontocracy" where power is based on individual achievement instead of membership of a particular group (e.g. the Tiwi). He (1978: 141, 150) introduces this distinction in order to show that the Dassanetch show elements of both potentialities: their age-system is "ascriptive" in that there is an hierarchical ranking of generation sets but it is "achieved" in that the main mechanism for power accumulation is through an individual's astute formation of marriage alliances and bond partnerships.

This brief resume of the ethnographic evidence suggests that while the idea of a gerontocracy is a useful tool for explaining the sorts of arrangements in societies with age-sets, the gerontocratic principle in itself does not suggest how the power relationship between young and old men will be defined or in what terms the competitive element will be played out. While access to marriageable women may seem an obvious point of distinction, Almagor's material suggests that the situation may be far more complex than it at first appears in societies that have an age-set system.

The foundation of all arguments relating to gerontocratic principles and power relationships between any one age-set and other members of the society is, as might be expected, based on a discussion of access to resources. Talle (1988: 93-94) for instance, sees age-sets as the

"foundation of Maasai politics" and cites sources of power and authority as emanating from the age-set's curse and corporate decision-making role. Llewelyn-Davies (1981: 337) is less explicit and sees elders, rather than age-sets, as being crucial in making "all the important decisions involving the disposal of resources, the sale, slaughter, or gift of livestock, and the marriage of daughters" and sees moran as being "extruded from the patriarchal units", and women as subordinate. Baxter and Almagor (1978) agree with Llewelyn-Davies here and see the control of elders as the crucial element in the formula which allows for gerontocratic control and add that "it is gerontocracy which encourages age-setting, rather than age-setting which encourages gerontocracy" (1978: 14).

This means that in political terms the debate really becomes one as to whether age-sets or individuals are in control of crucial resources. But if one accepts the notion of a resource as a "valued object", then material goods and labour do not form the limits of that which can be defined as a resource. For example, while the age-sets in Maasai do not have direct control of material goods or livestock, it is through the age-sets that networks of stock associates are built up. Spencer (1988: 194-195) has also pointed out that elders often arrange for their daughters to marry the sons of their age-mates. These two examples show how members of an age-set can control a variety of transactions that are crucial to social reproduction and the survival and continuity of pastoral production. Membership of a group such as an age-set can therefore provide opportunities that would otherwise not be available. Thus membership of a group may in itself be the 'valued object' that individuals seek. While this is not the case for the Maasai age-set system, where males automatically become members of a set as they pass through the appropriate rituals, the threat of expulsion from a set is a powerful form of sanctioning.

Thus, the accepted behavioural patterns that exist between age-mates and between age-sets is the basis upon which the Maasai age-sets exercise control. How behavioural restraint is effected can be seen by considering how age-sets function. This can be done by looking at the personnel who hold special positions in an age-set and their relationship to the set. Investigating these special statuses is appropriate because the individual holders are often described as having power and authority over their age-mates.

There are four specific roles that go with every age-group or age-set. These are: *olaiguenani* (pl. *ilaiguenak)* or spokesman; *oloing'oni* (lit. 'the bull'; pl. *iloing'ok*) who is a leader of a war party; *olotuno* (lit. 'the one who is planted upright') who is a ritual leader; and *oloboruenkeene* (lit. 'the one of the cut calf strap') who is a deputy ritual leader. Of these four roles that of *oloing'oni* is now largely irrelevant because *ilmurran* no longer undertake major war parties. The roles of *olotuno* and *oloboruenkeene* are of special significance at *eunoto* while the role of *olaiguenani* is the only role that remains an active one throughout the lifetime of an age-set.

Olotuno and *oloboruenkeene* have been discussed in detail by those authors who have described the events of *eunoto* (Fosbrooke 1948; Galaty 1983; Hamilton 1963; Jacobs 1965; Sarone & Hazel 1984; Spencer 1988). After *eunoto* the ritual leader and his deputy no longer play an active role in ritual events. The roles of *olotuno* and *oloboruenkeene* are therefore mainly of ritual significance and their importance is bound up with the performance of *eunoto*. In some ways their significance is similar to that of *olaiguenani* and where this is the case I shall consider all three roles together.

In the case of all three roles individuals do not seek to have the role bestowed upon them. If a person finds out that they are to fill one of these roles then they will run away (Galaty 1983; Galaty & Lembuyia 1984: 21-22; Jacobs 1965: 265; Spencer 1988: 103 & 145). One reason for the unpopularity of these roles may be that each of them separates off the individual in that office from his fellow age-mates. Spencer (1988: 104-105), for example, states that *olaiguenani* of *emanyata* must remain aloof from his fellows and support the firestick elders in any dispute. He must sit with the elders at debates and in many ways he acts as a link between the two groups. He also represents the age-group in their dealings with the ritual expert, or *oloiboni*.

Olotuno and *oloboruenkeene* also must not behave like normal *ilmurran*. They must not show emotion and "they must prematurely adopt the norms of elderhood" (Galaty 1983: 370).[7] The ritual leader is also the

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7. During moranhood displays of emotion are not uncommon. Ilmurran drink herbal mixes and throw fits. Spencer (1988: 120) describes this as to "shiver" (*aikirikira*) or to "shake" (*aposhoo*) with anger. While such negative emotional reactions are normally suppressed (see Chapter 6), the anti-structural nature of moranhood involves an inversion of normally acceptable behaviour.

first person of the age-set to be married and so "become 'like' an elder" (Jacobs 1965: 265). All three holders are meant to be respected by their age-mates.

The idea of respect implies authority and authority creates a mental, as well as a physical, separation from others. If these three roles involve a perceived element of authority then this automatically separates off the holders from their age-mates. In Chapter 6 I discuss more fully the problems of separating oneself off from one's fellow Maasai. Suffice it to say here that to do so is contrary to acceptable practice. This suggests that the reason why being chosen for one of these three roles is perceived as undesirable is because the special status and behaviour that goes with each of these roles is antithetical to the expressed ideals of the culture. This may also explain why the fate of *olotuno* is thought to be the reverse of that for the rest of the age-group, and why bad luck is thought to pursue him (Jacobs 1965: 264-265; Spencer 1988: 145).

Olaiguenani is most active in the period before the age-group passes through *olng'esher*. Spencer (1988: 215) points out that in this period:

> "... these spokesmen may be replaced by new men who emerge as more adept in sensing which way the local breezes of opinion are blowing. The most influential elders are those who brief themselves before any local discussion and win the confidence of their age mates."

Spencer (1988: 215) also says that after this ceremony the spokesmen "have no unique authority". Further to this, Jacobs (1965: 314) says that beyond the major age-set rituals there are few occasions on which large age-set meetings are convened. These observations suggest that the role of *olaiguenani*, as for those of *olotuno* and *oloboruenkeene*, are especially significant in the period when a new age-set is being formed. The main difference lies in the significance of *olotuno* and *oloboruenkeene* being largely restricted to the period of formation of an age-group, while for *olaiguenani* it extends over the whole period of the formation of the age-set. Beyond this time the role of *olaiguenani* is one of limited authority.

Ilaiguenak fulfil special tasks for their age-sets. First the spokesman is someone who arranges and presides over meetings and Jacobs (1965: 311) has described this role as being like that of a "chairman". Second the spokesman is meant to be an individual who is able to assess the mood of the people. As *olaiguenani*, he is not able to come

to unilateral decisions: these must be reached by the group who attend a meeting. The spokesman acts to summarise the arguments and coalesce public opinion into a consensus at a meeting. For example, Spencer (1988: 105-106) describes the spokesman of *emanyata* by saying that "he should be at the centre of all views, like the head in the middle of a headdress" and Galaty and Lembuyia (1984: 17) describe a spokesman as taking the lead "through forming and articulating a consensus of his peers, rather than through the assertion of authority". Both age-set spokesmen and their 'deputies' (*imurto*; sing. *emurt*) test the prevailing mood before committing themselves to reaching a consensus of opinion at a meeting. This shows that the emphasis is on everybody agreeing with the conclusions reached in the meetings and that *ilaiguenak* are expected to be able to bring about this agreement.

Thus to a large degree the role of *ilaiguenak* is about moulding public opinion into a consensus, usually in the forum of *inkiguenat* (age-set meetings). This procedure reduces the possibility of there being either intra-community or inter-community tension. There are parallels that can be drawn between this observation and that regarding the social need to suppress or resolve those tendencies in the individual and the group towards negative emotional reactions (see Chapter 6). Emotional outbursts of anger or violence are the overt expression of discord. The social importance of harmony explains the emphasis in Maasai society on consensus. Thus, the emphasis on reaching a consensus of opinion at meetings is yet another expression of the desire for harmony in the community. The role of *olaiguenani* is therefore to be the guardian of this social ideal and if an individual fails to fulfil this role then he will be replaced.

Abuse of the position of *olaiguenani* also leads to the removal of the person from the office (Jacobs 1965: 310; Spencer 1988: 215). The individual's credibility therefore only holds for as long as that person remains impartial and able to access local feeling. This suggests that the holder of the office of *olaiguenani* is only effective in the post as long as he uses influential political techniques, rather than ones based on authority or power. If this is the best way to achieve desired ends within the context of the age-set structure then the next question one needs to ask is why this should be the case.

The best description of this process of influential politics within the context of an age-set comes from Spencer's (1965) analysis of the Samburu. While there are no specific roles found within Samburu age-sets, the basic principles remain the same as for the Maasai because certain individuals may gain positions of influence so that others regard their opinions as especially significant to the decision-making process.

In describing the Samburu, Spencer has argued against Leach's (1954: 10) claim that "a conscious or unconscious wish to gain power is a very general motive in human affairs". Spencer uses this point in order to investigate whether individual elders are able to wield power over others. He (1965: 181) notes that amongst the Samburu it is possible for an individual to attain a position of influence. Such an individual is labelled as *laiguenan* (from the same verb root *aiguena* as in Maasai and meaning to discuss). This is not an office but is rather a status that is achieved as a result of the individual's ability as a debater and provider of advice. Two other features of the individual's personal life are important. These are that he conducts his affairs "with wisdom" and that he willingly accepts solutions to problems that are compromises (1965: 183). Spencer (1965: 183) says of the latter characteristic that the man "attaches greater importance to an equable solution for all than to a satisfactory solution for only one party - even if he himself is personally implicated". This suggests a social desire for a consensus of opinion like that found among the Maasai. It also suggests a corresponding relationship between the influential individual and the group, where influence hinges on an ability to bring the opinions of others together, thus reducing the potential for social discord.

Of particular relevance is Spencer's observations regarding the difference between aspirations to influence versus those to power in Samburu. He states (1965: 182) that it is only so long as an individual "consistently gives good advice and continues to persuade others" that he will hold a position of influence, and adds that "any ambition to gain power ... implies competition and this contradicts the Samburu ideal of conformity". Influence is therefore an accepted aspect of personal political practice amongst the Samburu while power is not.

From Spencer's description it can be seen that the hazards of being powerful or authoritarian lie in the fact that to behave in such a manner will separate one off from the rest of society, an observation that has already been made about the specialised roles that are found in Maasai age-sets. As

for the Maasai, influence is a crucial element of the political process amongst the Samburu. The similarities between the Samburu and Maasai cases are obvious. In both societies the emphasis is on the individual being a part of a whole rather than being a person who stands out as different to others. This accord with others is most easily achieved, in political terms, by the practice of influential techniques. It is therefore the desire for an harmonious social existence that makes influence, rather than power or authority, the preferred technique for persuading others to one's point of view. If either power or authority is exercised then social discord is more likely to result.

The foregoing discussion has considered individual personalities and roles in the age-set system. These roles have been considered because they separate off the individuals in the roles from the rest of society. This might imply that the practice of power and authority is needed to fulfil these roles but this has been found not to be the case.

There is one further aspect of the use of power and authority within Maasai society that needs to be considered. So far the discussion has looked at the relationships and interactions of people with each other. But another aspect of the practice of power and authority relates to technique rather than the role or personality of particular individuals. For example, the exercise of power usually involves controlling behaviour of others through the imposing of sanctions. This is the topic of the next section.

4.4 Sanctions

Most literature on the Maasai refers to the application of sanctions as being the prerogative of the age-sets. But it is not only age-sets or age-set members who can apply sanctions. Individuals, and members of *ilamala*, for example, may also practise this right. I shall therefore discuss the use of sanctions in terms of their broad application.

The Maasai believe that sanctions are more likely to be efficacious where a group of individuals, rather than an individual, impose the sanction (Jacobs 1965: 349). Further, control or retribution through the use of force or physical coercion is not a preferred method by which an age-set gains compliance from an individual (Jacobs 1965: 347-348). Where such methods are employed they should be undertaken by groups and not individuals. Both instances suggest an emphasis on group solidarity

amongst the Maasai (cf. Llewelyn-Davies 1978), where group solidarity provides the moral justification for an action. Thus it is because the age-set is a united group that it is the most 'powerful' medium through which sanctions can be applied. This would also explain why the application of sanctions is often perceived as the prerogative of age-sets.

Jacobs (1965) lists a number of sanctions that the Maasai are able to employ to gain compliance. These are: "public ridicule and mockery (*akueniyie*, 'to laugh at' and *amor*, 'to insult'); lose of privilege (*alaisho naikarsei*); fines (*sogo*); ritual oaths (*olmumai*) and ritual curses (*oldeket*); and in the case of breaches of customary law, reparations (*alaaki*) and ostracism (*aimalimal*)" (1965: 348-349). Of the sanctions listed by Jacobs I shall focus here on the curse. This is because the curse is the most powerful sanction available to the Maasai. It has also been most widely written about (Hollis 1905; Jacobs 1965; Llewelyn-Davies 1978, 1981; Spencer 1988; Talle 1988).

A curse usually consists of two parts: a physical act in conjunction with a verbal statement.[8] Descriptions of actual curses are rare but Holford-Walker (1949 - KNA DC/NRK 1/3/1) describes *endung'ore*, the ceremony which marks the closure of an open period for male circumcision for *IlDalalekutuk* section of the Maasai. One part of this ceremony is the placing of a curse on any boy who is circumcised during the closed period on circumcision (see Spencer 1988: 66-67 for a fuller description of how this works).[9] Holford-Walker says that the ritual was preceded by a discussion of the way in which the ritual should be performed because it had not been done for the previous four age-groups. The elders who were present suggested three alternatives: burying and cursing a stone; cursing a dead bird and a stone together; and wrapping a cloth around a knife and cursing it. In the end they decided to choose the third alternative.

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8. Compare this with the Samburu where the physical action which accompanies the verbal oath is less common (Spencer 1965). For both groups the verbal statement appears to be the crucial element of the curse.

9. The implications of sorcery which go together with the physical act that is part of the curse, or the unspoken 'curse of the stomach', have been discussed by Spencer (1988) and Jacobs (1965). While the possibility of sorcery is an important element in the role of the curse it is not directly relevant to the present discussion. Were a more detailed study of curses being made then these aspects would need to be considered.

A number of people can make curses. Spencer (1988) gives the following possibilities: a father can curse a daughter who does not accept a proposed spouse (p. 26); those elders who are themselves unable to marry a girl may curse her children if her husband displeases an elder (p. 29); mothers and fathers can curse their own children (p. 48); ritual leaders can curse their fellow moran (p. 156); ritual delegations (*ilamala*) can curse if they are angry (p. 213), usually caused by a lack of co-operation over legitimate demands; and firestick elders can curse those for whom they are patrons (p. 107). Talle (1988: 92) adds to this list the possibility of a wife cursing a husband, an age-group cursing an age-mate and women cursing men who "break codes of respect related to sexuality". The general assumption made about the relationship between those who can make a curse and those who are to be cursed is that the former hold authority or power over the latter (Jacobs 1965: 349; Talle 1988: 92; and cf. Kratz 1989 for the Okiek). But this approach is misconceived. A better way of describing the position of the individual or group who make the curse is by seeing them as being closer to the 'morally correct' position in society than that held by the offender. That is, the curser is the representative of social norms, and thus is acting as a moral arbiter, or at least the instigator of a moral process, against the perpetrator of a 'crime' or anti-social act.[10] From this stance, rather than that based on straightforward authority or power, it is possible to explain why the curse of a group should be more powerful than that of an individual. If the idea that the social attitudes expressed in a community can be placed along a continuum is accepted, then group action in the case of a curse is more likely to reflect the 'norm' of social opinion than that of any one single individual. This means that the power of the curse stems from the fact that a representative opinion of the community is the basis upon which the curse is made, rather than it being the idiosyncratic view of an individual. The intention of a curse, after all, is to shift the offender back to a position of equilibrium which accords with the most commonly held view of the community. Group action is therefore the preferred means by which to apply sanctions because legitimacy will stem from the group in the use of the technique. Or, to put it another way, it is not the technique that is crucial when applying a curse, but rather it is the

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10. Compare this with Evans-Pritchard's (1956: 172) statement that among the Nuer it is only when the the social obligations have been flouted between the persons involved in the laying of a curse that the curse can be effective, thus suggesting a necessary moral correctness for the Nuer as well as for the Maasai in the use of the curse.

consensus of opinion that leads to the joint action of making the curse that is of paramount importance.

The Maasai do not use curses lightly.[11] For instance, I came across no case of a curse while in the field and Voshaar (1979: 189) heard reports of only three probable cases during his time in Maasailand. Spencer (1988) gives several examples of the use of the curse amongst *IlMatapato* but in this instance their prevalence may partly relate to the social tension current in *IlMatapato* as a result of the drought and famine. Specific examples cited by Spencer (1988) are those of a father cursing his son (pp. 88-89), an elder cursing the moran (p. 88), age-mates cursing one of their fellows (pp. 223-224), and the alleged premature death of *IlPurko* spokesman because of a curse (p. 107).

As most authors point out, the threat of a curse is usually sufficient incentive to bring the offender into line. Spencer gives two examples where this occurred. In one case a moran who killed a lion did not receive the mane for a headdress because there was a dispute about who was entitled to it. The moran's friends convinced him not to pursue the matter for fear of being cursed by the patrons of the age-group (1988: 117). The other example involved a dispute over an animal. After a great deal of acrimony and some violence the elders resolved the dispute by persuading one of the protagonists to pay a fine. The elders were able to persuade the protagonist to pay the fine on the grounds that this would "annul any curse" that might be made on him (Spencer 1988: 55).

These two examples show that threatening to curse can become an exercise in brinkmanship as another example from Spencer (1988: 101, Case 24) also shows. In this example *ilmurran* had been prevented by their patrons from mounting posses to 'capture' mothers for the establishment of *emanyata*. A group of them posed as firestick elders (*olpiron*) and performed a ceremony that ritually overrode the authority of the elders.[12] They then planned to build *emanyata*. When *olpiron* found out about the action of *ilmurran* they were furious. The only recourse they could take

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11. This is in contrast with the Okiek (Kratz 1989) and the Rendille (Spencer 1973), but is similar to the Samburu (Spencer 1965) and the Karimojong (Dyson-Hudson 1966).

12. One has to have lived with the Maasai to understand just how powerful an act of defiance this was because by performing the ceremony *ilmurran* are showing no respect for their firestick elders (see especially Llewelyn-Davies 1978 for a discussion of the idea of respect).

against *ilmurran* was to curse them. After a confrontation between the two groups, where the moran were "threatened" and "intimidated", the moran agreed to pay a large fine. The firestick elders, in turn, re-established their authority by ritually endorsing *emanyata* of *ilmurran.*

This is another example which shows that the Maasai avoid disruptive action if at all possible. The elders could have cursed the moran in order to maintain their supremacy over the situation but ultimately decline to do this. In this instance it can be seen why this should be the case. If *olpiron* had cursed *ilmurran* then the link between the two groups would have been broken. Without the link the firestick elders would have had no group of *ilmurran* to whom they were patrons. The means by which the age-sets socially reproduce themselves would consequently have been destroyed because there would have been no firestick elders to facilitate the transformation into elderhood. To curse *ilmurran* would therefore be a futile act. It would only lead to the destruction of that which the firestick elders hold authority over and so lead to their own destruction. As Spencer (1988: 101) concludes, the course of action taken by the elders was seen as "the only realistic and propitious course" available to them.

One can ask why it is more common to threaten to make a curse than to make one. By comparing age-set meetings and the use of the curse it is possible to tease out why this should be the case. Age-set meetings ideally exemplify all that is positive about Maasai society. Large groups of individuals come together and by a process of 'debate' aim to reach a consensus of opinion that suggests there is agreement between all those involved. This means appropriate action can be taken with the backing of the group and social accord can be maintained. It also implies an harmonious process of negotiation leading to agreement. On the other hand, a curse is something made only under the direst circumstances when an individual, or a group of individuals, refuse to conform with an expressed social ideal (cf. Evans-Pritchard 1956). In this instance, those who are acting without the support of the wider community have already separated themselves off by their defiant action. A curse has the power to make the separation a permanent one. For example, Jacobs (1965: 292) describes the curse of *olpiron* as holding "the power of social 'life-or-death' over their age-set 'sons'". He (1965: 292) also says that when a father, who is also in the relationship of *olpiron*, curses a son then it is like being able to "ritually extinguish" the "social existence" of the son and will lead to his

"ostracism" by society.[13] Thus curses are not made lightly because they can lead to the social death of those who are cursed.

It is not surprising that the occasions on which curses are most likely to be made, or be threatened to be made, are in the periods of time when a new age-group is being formed. This is a particularly tense time as Spencer's (1988) ethnography clearly shows. But the atmosphere may also be tense on other occasions. One example of this is at *ilamala* for female fertility rites. These two occasions are similar because in each case a group has formed in order to question the basis of the existing social order (see Chapter 5) and the resolution of this questioning can be peacefully achieved only with the co-operation of those who are sponsoring the group. Consequently these are occasions when the solidarity of the community may appear to be threatened. As Spencer (1988: 271) points out regarding the formation of a new group of *ilmurran*, the transition marks "a fine dividing line between a ritualised display of power and true rebellion". It is when the shift in emphasis is from 'ritualised display' to 'true rebellion' that the threat of curses is most likely. This is because the practice of 'true rebellion' marks off those participating in the act. It places them outside the range of normally accepted social behaviour. But to make a curse is actually to go over the brink and so move one step closer to social chaos, an option that the example given above of the compromise reached by the moran and their patrons, suggests is avoided if at all possible. For while there are these potentially disruptive periods of time in Maasai society, when social discord appears to be likely, the long-term welfare of the society relies on these tensions being resolved in an harmonious and non-violent way.

So far in this chapter I have looked at power and authority in order to investigate why the Maasai use of these forms of political persuasion infrequently. I have shown that the use of both power and authority can lead to the disruption of social accord. All Maasai are aware of this potential. For the last 100 years the Maasai have lived under the rule of an outside government. In this time there have been some remarkable

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13. This is slightly different to the Samburu where the decision whether to curse someone or not, is often at the level of the individual, rather than the group, and may hinge on the individual's own use of prestige and influence. However stepping back from actually cursing another still has potentially similar consequences as for the Maasai and the threat to curse an individual can be as powerful a means-to-an-end as for the Maasai, if not more so (see Spencer 1965 for further details).

confrontations between the two groups. The nature of these confrontations reinforces the finding that the Maasai prefer not to use power and authority in resolving disputes. These events are worthy of consideration because they not only reinforce the findings of the foregoing discussion of power and authority but they also place Maasai politics in a broader context. The next section will therefore consider Maasai relationships with outside authority in the colonial and post-colonial periods.

4.5 The Exercise of Power and Authority by Government

Since colonization of Maasailand much of the contact between the Maasai and governments has been non-violent. In part, this has been because both sides have been talking *at* each other rather than *to* each other in what Knowles and Collett (1989: 455) have described as a "dialogue of the deaf". This style of interaction has only been possible, from the Maasai point of view, because in most instances government has either been unable, or unwilling, to exacerbate a situation when there has been a difference of opinion between the two groups. However, there have been occasions when this has not been the case. It is these moments in time that reveal the problems that arise when negotiation and reconciliation are not seen as being a possible option in the interaction between the Maasai and government. I shall look at three of these occasions.

The events I consider are: the 'uprising' of *IlPurko* moran in 1918, the murder of Major Grant in 1946 and the continuing 'problems' between the Maasai and the conservationist policies of the relevant governments regarding Amboseli and Ngorongoro.[14] The details of each of these events are first outlined in chronological order. I then discuss the political implications of these events.

The first example is that of the uprising of *IlPurko* moran at Ololunga in 1918. Various accounts of events preceding this uprising exist. The official version was that *IlPurko* objected to being recruited for military service in the Kenyan African Rifles (Sandford 1919). But Tignor (1972)

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14. The three examples used here are not the only cases when tension between the Maasai and outside authority has existed. Other notable occasions were the death of Andrew Dick in 1895 (Hanley 1971, Hindlip 1905, Leys 1925), the so-called 'Rotian riot' of 1935 (KNA PC/SP 1/6/2/1A, Tignor 1972), and the Tanzanian government's attempt in 1967 to make the Maasai wear western clothing (Anon. 1967, 1968a, 1968b).

says that all the Maasai he interviewed claimed that the uprising was because Maasai children were being forced to attend the new government school at Narok. One man Tignor interviewed described children going to school as like "an unbearable loss such as death or enslavement of children" (1972: 281). The truth probably lies somewhere in between with *IlPurko* discontent arising from a combination of factors. No matter what the cause, clearly the Maasai saw government as not consulting with them and acting in a high-handed manner. As a result tension mounted between government and the Maasai.

The climax came when the Officer-in-Charge of the Masai Reserve went to a village near Ololunga where he was told a group of moran were sleeping. The military surrounded the village with the intention of forcefully conscripting the moran into the Kenyan African Rifles. When the government officials arrived they found that there were no moran. The police opened fire accidentally and killed two women, several cattle and wounded some other people (Sandford 1919: 77). Three days later the moran attacked the Kenyan African Rifles' camp near Ololunga. Gun fire repelled them and killed several moran. The moran then roamed the area in smaller groups and attacked the shops, burning and pillaging them. They also killed several of the Indian shop owners and cut the telegraph line (Huxley 1935: 43; Sandford 1919: 78).

The government sent Delamere, a settler farmer who spoke Maa, into the Masai Reserve to talk to the moran. In the negotiations that followed the Maasai repeatedly said that they had not wished to fight the government. However when people had been killed at Ololunga by government police they had "attacked in desperation" (Huxley 1935: 47, quoting Delamere). Delamere was able to get *IlPurko* to agree to make their own choice of who they would send into the Kenyan African Rifles on the agreement that these individuals would not have cattle commandeered for military purposes while they were away. It was also agreed that the moran would pay a fine as compensation for the property they had damaged and the lives they had taken during the "uprising" (Sandford 1919: 81). But, the moran neither paid the fine, nor produced recruits for the Kenyan African Rifles. Sandford (1919: 81 fn.) adds that "the Muran continued a policy of passive resistance, avoiding all intercourse with Government officials".

In the second example, a moran speared to death Major Grant, who was overseeing a cattle auction in the Loita Hills, in 1946. Different versions exist as to why the moran speared Grant but all agree that it was because Grant insisted that the moran involved bring a particular animal to auction. One version is that the animal was a black bullock which the warrior did not wish to sell because it is only black bullocks that are sacrificed at particular ceremonies (Jacobs n.d.: 31). Another version is that it was a white cow which the warrior did not wish to sell because he had reared it by hand from birth (Farson 1949: 166). Whichever version is correct, it is obvious that the warrior was being asked to sell a beast that he particularly valued. The moran kept offering Grant more and more cattle as a replacement for the one that Grant wanted brought to auction. Grant refused these other animals, insisting that the animal the moran was particularly attached to be sold. As the animal was sold Grant told the warrior not to annoy him further and walked away from the auction. The moran picked up his spear and killed him (Farson 1949: 166-167).

The third example involves developments in the national parks and conservation areas located in Maasai territory in Tanzania and Kenya. The Amboseli area of southern Kenya and the Ngorongoro Crater and Serengeti plains of northern Tanzania have all been made conservation areas for wildlife: Amboseli and Serengeti are National Parks, while Ngorongoro is a conservation area. The Maasai traditionally used both Amboseli and Ngorongoro for dry season grazing. With the introduction of conservationist policies the access of the Maasai to these areas has been restricted and the people have lost their dry season grazing grounds.

The Kajiado County Council administered Amboseli in the 1960s as a National Reserve with the intention of converting it to a National Park (Western 1982a, 1982b). While the area was a National Reserve the Maasai retained access to the area and, of especial importance, to OlTukai swamp which was a major source of water in the dry season. However once the area became a National Park in 1977 the government refused the Maasai access to the Park.

Prior to 1977, when the area was under the administration of Kajiado County Council some of the profits from tourism were meant to be returned to the Maasai. This did not happen and, as a result, the Maasai speared 30 rhinoceroses over a five year period in the early 1970s (Western 1982a). In

Western's (1982b: 308) words this spearing of rhinoceroses by the Maasai was largely "to show their political dissatisfaction with their prospects in Amboseli".

In 1977 the Maasai lost access to OlTukai swamp when Amboseli was made a National Park. The administration had promised to build pipelines and water access points outside the Park for the Maasai but many of these did not work and the wildlife still moved onto the land surrounding the Park where the Maasai were living. Western (1982b: 12) says that the Maasai were furious and responded with "a declaration that unless the imbalance was rectified, they would destroy whatever wildlife they could, deny them access to traditional migratory areas, and burn the vital Amboseli swamps".

In the late 1970s the Maasai received funds from tourism and a guaranteed water supply. Thus, for a period there was a degree of co-operation between the Maasai and the Park authorities. However, since the late 1970s, whenever this atmosphere of co-operation has broken down, the Maasai have retaliated. For example, in the early 1980s Lindsay (1987) reports that the Maasai were again spearing rhinoceroses and elephants when the government stopped the funds to the Maasai. He (1987: 163) adds that "the resumption of elephant and rhinoceros spearing may be viewed as a return to political protest in the absence of communication within the established system".

The numbers of tourists visiting Amboseli have steadily increased in the 1980s and are now estimated at over 200,000 a year (ABC: 1992). Once again the Maasai are not receiving the benefits that they have been promised from the Park and in the latest protest are poisoning the lions in the Park. In addition, the Maasai are discussing fencing their lands which would prevent the seasonal migration of the wildlife that are a part of the Amboseli ecosystem. If the Maasai should do this then the *raison d'être* of Amboseli National Park, the wildlife, will be in jeopardy because their grazing areas will be restricted to within the confines of the Park.

This situation can be compared with that of the Ngorongoro Crater Conservation Area in Tanzania. In this case the Maasai have responded to the increasingly authoritarian approach of the Conservation Authority which administers Ngorongoro (Arhem 1984). Having been refused access to grazing areas during a drought, Arhem (1984: 198) says that in 1979 the tension between the Authority and the Maasai:

> "... erupted into violence when game scouts killed a young Maasai herdsman tending cattle in the Olduvai area. ... The

> Maasai retaliated by spearing a number of large game animals and by intensifying grass burning to express their defiance of the conservation regime."

These two examples show the response of the Maasai to the current problems they face with the national authorities. In both cases the administering authority has treated the needs of the Maasai without the seriousness that the Maasai believe they deserve. In response to the unwillingness of the government to provide the facilities that the Maasai have requested (based on negotiated agreements) they have resorted to techniques of force to show the authorities their dissatisfaction. But as the second example shows, once force is employed the confrontation is likely to escalate into violence.

All the examples given above have a common thread, whether they apply to an individual or a group of Maasai in their interactions with authority. In each case the Maasai have attempted to negotiate with the authorities about that which displeases them. But in each case the authorities have ignored Maasai appeals for a dialogue. Once the Maasai have felt that they are not being listened to then they have escalated the confrontation into one of violence.

These events show that the political strategies employed by the Maasai in their dealings with national governments provides the Maasai with the same conclusions regarding the use of power and authority as experience within the community does. Tensions rise and matters move out of control just as they do between individuals. The three events described above show that where it is not possible to negotiate an agreement, or where one party to an agreement refuses to fulfil the obligations of that agreement, then matters are likely to erupt into violent confrontation. The conservation example shows that government usually has taken notice of the Maasai protest and established at least a temporary 'peace'. But if governments then treat Maasai concerns with contempt the protest is renewed.

Maasai experiences with outside government reinforce their recognition of the futility of using power and authority. Where the Maasai have had to learn to live with outside authority the preferred way of handling this relationship is through negotiation and the use of influence, just as is the case with conflicts that develop internally. The political techniques employed by the individual are therefore the same as those used at the level of community and by the Maasai acting in concert at the 'national' level. It is now time to look at how people use influence.

CHAPTER FIVE
INFLUENCE

It is only in those societies where the negotiation of meaning is an important part of the political process that influence is likely to dominate the political system. Negotiation of meaning involves individuals in presenting their point of view and trying to convince others of the strength of their argument. It is when an individual successfully persuades others to accept a particular point of view that influence prevails. Crucial to this process is the ability of the individual to convince others. How one verbally expresses an idea is not the only relevant factor in the successful application of an influential political style. A person who successfully uses influence is someone who is not only clever with words but also someone who is capable of conceiving of an appropriate strategy to achieve a desired outcome (cf. Bourdieu 1977). The successful use of influence requires a balance between the two: while an individual may be clever with words, without also understanding how Maasai society functions, and thus being able to define appropriate strategies to achieve desired ends, the rhetorical style will provide only limited, short-term success. Using influence is therefore a complex and subtle political process.

In this chapter I shall consider this process in three different contexts. These are from the point of view of the individual, from the perspective of group action and from within the context of ritual practice.

5.1 The Use of Influence by the Individual

I suggested in the Introduction that there are two key areas of social interaction in *IlOitai* society where the machinations of the political process are most apparent. These are within the age-set system and the household. These are the two areas of concern covered by this section of the chapter. I consider them from the point of view of the individual and the ways in which the individual is able to influence the course of events within each of these domains. In this section I also look at how the two interact with each other.

As previously mentioned, Baxter and Almagor (1978) consider that conflict may arise between the interests of an age-set and the interests of an

household. Women's lives focus on the household and the needs of those who are under their care. Men, on the other hand, not only have to attend to the needs of the family but also have to maintain good relationships with their age-mates. This can place substantial demands on them for stock as either gifts to individuals or as contributions for sacrifice at ritual events. Men also have demands for stock placed upon them by relatives. It is only a man's wife who is able to defend the needs of the household against these external demands, without a sense of a conflict of interests. To talk of influence in the home is therefore to focus on the role that women play in the political process.

5.1.1 *Influence at Home*

In the previous chapter I noted that women are not powerless in *IlOitai* society. They have access to a number of resources and their labour makes a valuable contribution to the household unit. In addition, they are indispensable to the successful completion of ritual events through their role as the brewers of the beer, as well as the role they play in the building of ritual villages and the shaving of the ritual participants' hair. At the domestic level, women control the distribution of milk and consequently have the means to control events that occur within the home as Episode 4 (Chapter 4, p. 96) showed.

That women have access to resources and make a valuable contribution to the household means they are in a strong position when they attempt to influence the course of events within the domestic domain. In addition, while they lack jural control over animals their role as the 'guardians' of the animals which their sons will inherit means that the fate of individual animals in the family herd is open to negotiation. The following Episode shows how a woman can argue for the continued presence of a family's animals because of the family's need for adequate milk:

EPISODE 6.

> On one occasion the husband of Maitukaiya's second daughter came to take away some of our animals for herding. He sat in Maitukaiya's house and proceeded to tell us that we were in his debt because he was herding our animals (it turned out to be two oxen, three steers and two donkeys that he was taking with him) and asked *Papa* for a cow or *enkashe* (female calf) as payment of this debt.

Papa remained silent while Maitukaiya proceeded to tell *Ole* Melio that he could not have one of her animals (she was an only wife) because she had too many mouths to feed. *Papa* became even more detached from the proceedings as time went on and lay back on his bed while the conversation revolved around him.

When *Ole* Melio realised that he was getting nowhere in his claims for a cow or a calf he suggested a goat instead and pointed to the one tethered in the house (which belonged to the anthropologist!). Maitukaiya told him that the goat was not the family's to give away and the situation remained unresolved. Instead Maitukaiya promised him that we would slaughter a goat for him some time in the future. *Papa* had quietly fallen asleep by this stage.

Ole Melio left three days later with our seven animals, money for taking them to the dip, and a supply of tea and sugar for his family, but with no animal for himself.

In this Episode *Ole* Melio tried to claim a cow or a calf off the family as payment for the debt that he said the family had incurred by his looking after some of the family's herd. *Papa*, to whom the request was made, was quite happy to leave the 'negotiating' to his wife, Maitukaiya, and ended up taking no part in the discussion. He retired into the background and left Maitukaiya and *Ole* Melio to sort it out between them. Maitukaiya therefore became the negotiator over the matter of whether *Ole* Melio should get an animal or not. There are two important features to the way in which she did this.

First, she argued against the transfer of the animal by explaining to *Ole* Melio why the family's situation made it impossible. She did this by presenting her case in the light of her own family's needs: if *Ole* Melio took away an animal then the family would go hungry. This would mean that *Ole* Melio was depriving the family of the basic means of subsistence. *Ole* Melio had not based his request on the fact that his own family was starving, but because there was a debt. He was therefore left at a disadvantage in his discussion with Maitukaiya once she had put her point of view. This was because Maitukaiya had stated that the immediate needs were greater for her family than they were for *Ole* Melio's family and he could therefore not expect to have an animal given to him immediately as payment for the debt incurred by the family.

The argument that Maitukaiya used was an influential one: if *Ole* Melio took a milch cow away then Maitukaiya would be unable to feed her family adequately. She did not say that he could not have an animal outright, which would be a case of using power. In this particular case to use power would have required the involvement of *Papa.* He was the only person who could effectively pronounce that an animal would stay in the family. Others may say that an animal should not leave the family's herds but their ability to enforce the pronouncement would require the involvement and approval of others, and especially *Papa.*

Second, Maitukaiya is suggesting in this discussion that now is not an appropriate time to make a request for the payment of the debt. The 'discussion' therefore has no definitive ending. The assumption is that those involved can return to the matter at some later date and discuss it further. The family have not refused *Ole* Melio an animal outright and have not told him, for instance, that his request is unreasonable. Maitukaiya refutes *Ole* Melio's claim for an animal but does not treat the debate on the matter as therefore being closed.

IlOitai constantly use this technique. Often when individuals are negotiating over a matter, and one party feels that they are being refused a request, the other party will respond with the comment *'Eitu amit'*. This translates as 'I have not yet refused', with the implication that the matter is still open for debate. Thus, while the individual has not yet said 'yes', the individual has also not yet said 'no'. In these ways people can keep the lines of communication open so that there is the opportunity for further negotiations in the future.

In Episode 6 the animals that *Ole* Melio takes away are a relatively insignificant part of the family herd. But the son-in-law sees an opportunity to make a claim on the family. While our family refuses the immediate request, the son-in-law does not return home empty-handed. The family gives him money to pay for the welfare of the animals while they are in his care and some tea and sugar for his family. The nature of these gifts is small but it does suggest that the family acknowledges the son-in-law's point that the family is in his debt. So while he has been unable to elicit an animal from the family he has received some compensation for his efforts.

This example shows that the process of negotiating meaning is premised upon the use of influence. Because the use of influence can only be successful as long as individuals remain involved in the process, people

put a great deal of energy into ensuring that they do not become alienated from the process. In responding to a request individuals therefore aim to present a convincing reason as to why they cannot oblige the friend or relative in order to maintain the link between the two parties for future interaction.

The important aspect in this process is to be able to maintain an equilibrium that balances the positive and negative effects of one's responses so that others never view one as totally intransigent. One must appear to be capable of shifting one's stance according to the prevailing mood, just as at *inkiguenat* no decision is reached until a consensus prevails. If *Ole* Melio had been more forceful in his request and had suggested that Maitukaiya's claim about the needs of the family was invalid then the outcome could have been quite different. But this is not the way that negotiation normally takes place because such an approach is confrontational and implies the potential use of power in order to achieve desired ends.

In the domestic sphere women may also combine forces in order to achieve desired ends:

EPISODE 7.

> *Ng'oto* Moyioi (a daughter of Maitukaiya) had recently had a child (her fifth) and her husband had just taken a second wife. When he and *Papa* were drinking in Maitukaiya's house he suggested to *Papa* that he be given a cow, arguing that he had many demands placed on his herd. *Koko* (*Papa*'s mother-in-law) was serving them beer when this was said as Maitukaiya (*Papa*'s wife) had gone for water. When she heard this conversation she showed concern and told *Menye* Moyioi to leave it alone (*'tabala'*) because *Papa* was drunk.
>
> When *Menye* Moyioi had left, and Maitukaiya had returned, *Koko* told Maitukaiya what *Menye* Moyioi had said to *Papa*. Both women then approached *Papa* and argued that he could not give away one of our family's cows because it was important that the family fed me (the anthropologist) properly because I was good to them and never refused anything that they wanted. *Papa* said that he agreed with them and had no intention of giving *Menye* Moyioi one of our animals (even though he had seemed quite taken with the idea when *Menye* Moyioi proposed it). As a result *Menye* Moyioi did not get a cow from our herd.

Again the women rested their case regarding keeping an animal on the basis of the dietary needs of those they fed. By appealing to the needs of the family the women were able to sway *Papa*'s view of the situation and hence protect the family against the demands of his son-in-law. While *Papa* played down the women's role in this process, and suggested that it was all his own idea, it was the women who stated a case as to why an animal should not be given away. The way in which the women argued this was by using influence; the argument being that if *Papa* gave away a cow then the family could not properly feed the anthropologist.

As these last two Episodes clearly show, a woman's political influence is especially potent within the domestic domain and more specifically with regard to the stock interests of the family. But one should also note that the line of argument used by the women is one that appeals to a common cause (albeit one more central to women than men): that is, the welfare of the domestic unit. This is because the ultimate success of a domestic unit in pastoral terms is as much a result of the individual well-being of each member of the family as it is a consequence of the size of the family's herds.

In theoretical terms husbands can always overrule their wives because the women do not own the cattle. However because the cattle are being 'held' in care by the women on behalf of their sons, if a husband does chose to overrule his wife then she can resort to a more drastic form of protest or she can seek to involve which ever son will inherit the particular animal that is about to be given away. Obviously it is the cattle allocated to a woman for a very young son that are most vulnerable in these situations and this is when the personality of the individual woman becomes crucial. But also, if there is a dispute about taking an animal away from a wife, a man may resort to using his residual herd as a source of the gift rather than antagonise his wife and sons.

One could argue that influence is the only available technique open to women as a means by which to achieve such desired ends but this is not the case. However women prefer to use influence because it is neither disruptive to the management of the family's herds nor to the domestic unit. For instance, to deny a husband food, to refuse to milk the cows, or to move away from home all have the potential of creating a deep rift within the family unit and are negative, rather than positive, actions. The long-term impact of actions as drastic as these is much less predictable and is

potentially devastating as will be seen in the discussion of these matters in Chapter 6. It is therefore preferable to use influence as a means by which to persuade others in these contexts because it does not have the potential to break up the household.

However, the potential of a woman to influence the course of events is also dependent upon the wealth of the family and on the position of a woman's husband, if he is alive. For example, in one family at *enkang' empaash*, where the husband had sold all his animals for drink, the wife had very little room for manoeuvre (see Episode 1, Chapter 3, pp. 70-71). For most of the time this woman, Seiyan, was reliant on the kindness of her neighbours and the favours of her lovers in order to look after her family. While the family had received help from the man's age-mates, his continual mismanagement of any stock he had meant that his age-mates were increasingly unwilling to assist him. This finally came to a head when his wife left home in protest at her husband's actions, thus bringing her plight to the attention of the public. While the move was largely a symbolic gesture, because Seiyan moved into the house next door to her own, her action made the age-set of her husband aware of the problems in the family. As a result his age-mates called a meeting to discuss the matter. Seiyan defended herself at the meeting and agreed to return home. The age-set could not impose any sanctions because she had legitimate grounds for being discontent with her husband: that is, how could she feed her family if her husband sold any animal given to him. Seiyan's circumstances did not change as a result of the act of leaving home but neither did her position worsen. In the process she had been able to bring her situation to public notice and convince her husband's age-set that her grievance was a legitimate one.

In political terms this example shows how concerns that pertain to the domestic domain can become the concerns of the age-set. In this instance, because the age-set felt that the action of the woman, which affected one of their age-mates, pertained to the interests of the age-set they took the initiative and treated it as a matter that concerned them. They called *enkiguena* but had to involve Seiyan because she had have the opportunity to defend herself. While *Ole* Sipei also spoke at the meeting, Seiyan was the first to discuss the matter while he was not present. The fact that the woman had the opportunity to represent herself in the meeting is important because this shows that men do not dominate women (cf. Jacobs 1965: 296; Llewelyn-Davies 1978, 1981; Spencer 1988: 277; Talle

1987, 1988: 2, 94). Where a matter concerns a woman then she has the right to defend her position and state her case. As has already been said, she is therefore not a jural minor (see Chapter 3).

As a result of the woman being able to defend her actions, and because it was not within the power of the age-set to alter the actions of her husband, the age-set members were unable to condemn her. This was not a pre-determined outcome to the meeting because many of the women privately disapproved of Seiyan's actions. The outcome of the meeting was therefore in part a consequence of the woman's ability to present her story in such a way that she was able to convince others of the validity of what she said. This is a matter of political competence and will be returned to in Chapter 6

This example shows what can happen when a woman, through her actions, comes into contact with the age-set's sphere of influence. The age-set is effectively acting in the best interests of its member but because the age-mate behaved in an irresponsible manner they do not condemn the actions of his wife. But there is also another reason why Seiyan may have chosen to take this course of action. Seiyan might well have brought her plight to the attention of the age-set because she feared future trouble with her husband. She might, for instance, worry about the possibility of a beating by her drunken husband, or a beating when she could not feed him.[1] As she has drawn attention to her position before such an event occurs, others will consider her views more sympathetically if this should happen in the future. The age-set may well find itself in the role of being her protector rather than being an antagonist to her cause if she later gets beaten up by her husband. Thus, as a result of her interaction with the age-set, Seiyan is personally in a stronger position because a private matter has now become public and the age-set cannot ignore it if matters become worse. Public opinion, rather than family attitudes, is therefore likely to hold sway if Seiyan has any future trouble with her husband.

Let me summarise the argument so far. Women are able to influence decisions within the household by putting their point of view on a subject just as any man would at *inkiguenat*. If this fails and a woman still feels strongly about an issue then she can move out of her house. This action moves the discussion of the matter beyond the household and into

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[1]. I discuss wife beating in more detail in Chapter 6.

the public forum. At this stage an age-set may decide that the matter is one that concerns them. As Spencer (1977: 5) notes, by becoming involved, the elders, functioning as age-sets and through the convening of *inkiguenat*, have the "power to interpret the balance of abuse by both parties [in a case], and to resolve ambiguities in specific situations". Once a situation reaches the stage of calling *enkiguena*, it is no longer within the 'power' of the individual to ensure that there is a particular outcome to the debate. Thus any potential 'power' that a husband may have over a wife is nullified once the dispute becomes a matter of public concern. On the other hand, a woman may work outside the constraints of an age-set and can always move away from home permanently in protest to her husband's actions.

So far in this section I have considered the ways in which individuals are able to influence events that relate to the household. I have shown that age-sets may become involved in domestic affairs if a matter is brought to public attention. This is at the initiative of the age-set or a group of age-mates. It now remains to show how individuals use influence in their dealings with the age-sets.

5.1.2 *Influencing the Age-Set*

There are two ways in which an individual's ability to influence events can involve an age-set. First, the individual can influence the decisions made by an age-set, and second the individual can use an age-set to influence events on their behalf. Both strategies require that the individual is able to convince those concerned of the validity of an argument. But the process of achieving the desired outcome is different. The former relies on the individual being able to gain the support needed on their own, while the latter channels the gaining of support through the age-set.

The first instance relies on the individual's personal ability to alter the course of thinking of an age-set and usually occurs in opposition to the apparent will of the age-set as in Episode 1 (Chapter 3, pp. 70-71). In Episode 1, the age-set members arrange the meeting because of their discontent with Seiyan's treatment of her husband but because Seiyan successfully defended her position they were unable to censor her behaviour. It was therefore Seiyan's individual initiative that influenced the outcome of the meeting.

While women are not usually a part of age-set *inkiguenat* there are more subtle ways in which they are able to influence the decisions reached at age-set meetings as Episode 3 (Chapter 3, pp. 72-73) showed. In this case the complaint about Maitukaiya came from the members of an age-set who revealed her relationship with *Ole* Sipei at an age-set meeting, an event outside Maitukaiya's control. The only way in which she could influence the course of events was by convincing her husband that either the information was incorrect or that he should not take any notice of it. This she managed to achieve by pre-empting the views of those outside the household. The result was that *Papa* decided to treat the decisions of the junior age-set as irrelevant and took no action against his wife.

Episodes 1 and 3 show how women, who are directly affected by age-set decisions, may influence those decisions and even be able to override the impact of the age-set's assumptions and conclusions: in Episode 1 an age-set meeting accepts the woman's point of view and no course of action was taken against her despite the natural tendency for the age-set to support one of their fellow members; and in Episode 3 the woman convinced her husband to ignore the age-set's comments regarding her relationship with another man.

Episode 3 showed how household interests can override age-set interests. From the point of view of *IlDeregaiyani* (the dominant age-set in *enkang' empaash*) *Ole* Sipei's continued frequenting of *enkang' empaash* was problematic. His age-mates in *enkang' empaash* had lent and given him animals in the past but he had always sold them. Any relationship based on stock with *Ole* Sipei was therefore an unproductive one because *Ole* Sipei was unlikely to be able to reciprocate in the gift exchanges. His age-mates were consequently ambivalent about his association with his lovers at *enkang' empaash* because through his lovers he was still able to make demands upon the residents of *enkang' empaash*. Consequently, the age-set tried to censor his behaviour and blame Maitukaiya for his continued presence at *enkang' empaash*. Because *Papa* chose not to accept the conclusion reached by *enkiguena* regarding the reasons why *Ole* Sipei still frequently came to *enkang' empaash* there was little that *IlDeregaiyani* could do about the matter.

Episodes 1 and 3 show how an individual may be able to influence the decisions reached by an age-set. More commonly, people seek to get an age-set to influence events on their behalf. In this case people use the

'power' and 'authority' of the age-set to give weight to an argument. To use this successfully as part of a strategy people rely on the group's agreement. In this case the age-set acts as the instrument of the individual. An individual therefore has to be able to convince a group of individuals, or at the very least an 'influential' representative of the group, of the argument.

The important issue, when any individual brings a matter to the attention of an age-set, is therefore the validity of the argument presented. By validity I mean the social acceptability of the case as made by the person. Thus, in Episode 1, the fact that Seiyan's husband had sold all his cattle substantiated her argument that she could not adequately feed her family. The age-set could therefore not condemn her actions because her complaint was a legitimate one. To involve an age-set in matters normally outside their sphere of influence therefore requires that the case have wider implications regarding the maintenance of social order. Without this the age-set are unlikely to accept the plea of the defendant as legitimate. Validity therefore stems from the accepted social norms of society.

Spencer (1988: 244, Case 60), for example, cites the case of a woman who gained age-set and sub-clan support for her condemnation of the actions of her 'guardian'. The woman's father kept Siekwa as a girl of the village so that there were male offspring to inherit his stock. When the father died and an agnatic cousin became Siekwa's guardian he assumed control of the herds and arranged the marriage of Siekwa. Siekwa's husband died after she gave birth to her first child and she ran away to the home of a subclansman. The subclansman was also the spokesman for her father's age-set. Siekwa believed that her husband's death resulted from her guardian not obeying the intentions of her father and that the death was the result of a curse. The spokesman with whom Siekwa had taken refuge led a deputation to the guardian. The delegation convinced the guardian that he should reinstate Siekwa as a girl of the village. Spencer (1988: 244) adds that she bore a son and by 1977 was a "formidable lady" living in Meto with her son, his four wives and ten sons.

In this case Siekwa successfully gained the support of her father's age-set in order to intervene in the domestic affairs of the family. The spokesman deemed Siekwa's case as legitimate because the evidence of the death of her husband supported it. Thus the age-set perceived Siekwa as having a valid case and willingly intervened for her. Spencer's (1988: 244) comment that Siekwa was a "formidable lady" suggests that the personality

of Siekwa may have contributed to her success in her dealings with her father's age-set and her guardian. In this case Siekwa used the age-set to gain support for her case.

Spencer's ethnography shows that this is a common way in which individuals deal with personal problems that cannot be resolved within the domain of the household. The dilemmas that the individual faces may not be strictly domestic, but they are cases where the age-set can become an important element in the process of resolving the problem. For example, Spencer (1988: 114, Case 25) cites another case of a widow, Naeku, who had been popular with *ilmurran* when she was a girl. Because she had no close kinsmen to arrange a marriage for her son he could not find a wife. Naeku approached the age-set who had been *ilmurran* when she was a girl and asked them to arrange her son's marriage. They agreed to do this. Spencer (1988: 114) adds that "they felt obliged to help her as though she were still one of them, and the sense of manyata solidarity lingered with them".

Here Naeku called upon the assistance of the age-set with whom she consorted when she was a girl in the manyata. Spencer (1988: 114) believes that the age-set agreed to help her largely because Naeku had helped them as *ilmurran* to get food from her parents. The age-set therefore felt indebted to her for her role in their period as *ilmurran*, a point that is illustrated by their description of the solidarity that exists between them.

Women may appeal to one of several possible age-sets to achieve desired ends as the above examples illustrate. They may take a case to the age-set of their father; the age-set of their husband, especially if the husband is deceased; or the age-set with whom they stayed in *emanyata* when they were girls. For the woman, the important feature in these dealings is being able to assess which age-set will be most responsive to an appeal and therefore will be most likely to succeed in bringing about the desired aim.

Men are also not necessarily restricted by the age-set to which they belong in order to seek assistance in a dispute. For example, Spencer (1988: 234-235, Case 54) describes an instance where a man's son, Kinai, appealed to his father's age-set for support against his father, which the age-set gave him. Masiani dominated his son, Kinai, even though he was an elder. While Kinai had control of his cattle his father had not split the

herd and so Kinai continued to live with his father. Kinai, against his father's will, attended the initiation of a friend's son in Arusha. On his return Masiani argued about this until Kinai ran away to the home of Kwemeri, an age-mate of Masiani. Kwemeri and two age-mates persuaded Masiani to split the herd so that Kinai could be independent of his father. Kinai then moved to a neighbouring *enkang'* with his herd.

In this instance, the domination of Kinai by his father after he became an elder strengthened the case for the intervention of the father's age-set. This is because it is Masiani's behaviour that is unreasonable and not that of Kinai. Masiani's age-set would also be the most likely group to be able to influence the behaviour of Masiani because they are his peers. For him to ignore their comments would diminish his position within his own age-set. It is the age-set who restrains the tyrannical behaviour of Masiani towards his son and in so doing the possibility of a permanent split between father and son is avoided. This is a further example of members of an age-set acting to resolve what is essentially a domestic problem.

Thus both women and men may seek assistance from the age-sets to resolve disputes that seem otherwise intractable. Where the difference lies is in the nature of the concerns of women and men Women, whose central concern is the domestic domain, are likely to take insoluble family matters to an age-set. Men may also take domestic matters to an age-set. But because age-sets form the social domain of elderhood, matters relating to the age-sets are also of central concern. One further example from Spencer will illustrate this point.

Spencer (1988: 143-144, Case 30) cites the case of an individual instigating an action through one age-set in order to affect the behaviour of another age-set. In this example, one of the members of *IlTerito* age-set, Sarengei, had fallen on hard times. The Matapato area was undergoing a drought and many families had lost stock. Sarengei's family had lost nearly all its cattle and the eldest of Sarengei's two sons, who was *olmurrani*, was unhealthy. His younger son, who was also *olmurrani*, wished to seek employment in order to assist the family. However this was not possible while he was still a moran.

Sarengei approached the firestick elders of the current moran (Nyankusi or *IlNyankusi* = *IlNyang'gusi* in *IlOitai*) and his age-mates about the matter. He approached the problem by arguing to these elders that "Matapato restrictions on junior moran seeking work was outmoded"

(1988: 143) and that three moran from his village should be allowed to drink milk to lift the restrictions of moranhood. Two of these three moran were his own sons, while the third was the son of a widowed woman who had no animals. Her son also wished to seek employment to help his family.

Sarengei got the agreement of the local elders who then arranged for the 'drinking milk' ceremony to take place for the three moran. The three moran told their age-mates that they were about to drink milk for fear of retribution from their peers. A deputation of moran then challenged the elders about their having overridden traditional practice. A debate between the moran and especially the firestick elders ensued. During these proceedings Spencer (1988: 144) notes that Sarengei "remained subdued".

The firestick elders argued their case on the grounds that they held the ultimate veto over the moran because they could use their age-set's curse against them. They also said that they knew best how to interpret tradition, and especially on how it should be applied in difficult times. The moran shifted from an aggressive to a defensive position once the firestick elders suggested that a curse would "harm their own reputation" and that the moran did not have the resources to pay a fine to annul such a curse (1988: 144). The moran concluded by saying that a premature 'milk-drinking' ceremony was not to happen again before *eunoto*, to which the elders responded that they could not guarantee this because of the drought.

Spencer (1988: 144) continues:

> "The outcome was precisely as Sarengei had predicted. The moran had mobilised themselves to defend the manyata domain in debate, but the elders doggedly maintained that realism has always been a foremost consideration in Maasai society, and it was they who pinned the moran down. The 'milk-drinking' ceremony followed at once."

Thus the three moran became premature elders and were able to seek employment.

Sarengei's success in having his sons promoted as premature elders shows to great effect the successful manipulation of a situation by an individual, where that person uses the authority of the age-set system as a factor in the resolution of the matter. Sarengei realises that the end he wishes to achieve - the establishment of his sons as premature elders - is a tricky one and apparently unprecedented in Matapato. However, he has a strong case because the ultimate aim of his endeavour is the physical

survival of his family. This shows that his motivation is not selfishness. But to achieve this end he requires the approval of his son's age-mates. He approaches the problem by first sounding out local opinion and here the fact that his proposition would benefit another family must add weight to his argument. Because promoting his sons is an age-set matter, it is from the age-sets (those of the firestick elders - *IlNyankusi* - and his own age-set - *IlTerito*) that he seeks approval and support for his argument. This he gets and needs, because when the moran find out about the proposed 'milk-drinking' ceremony they object. As an individual Sarengei's argument would carry very little weight against the moran. But because the firestick elders have taken over the case they can override the view of the moran and so Sarengei succeeds in his aim of having the three boys promoted prematurely: they undergo the 'milk-drinking' ceremony and two of them go in search of work.

This case shows that the concerns of the individual may become the focus of attention in a debate between age-sets. The debate between the moran and the firestick elders is in itself an example of the art of compromise because the discussion between the two groups aims to achieve a consensus of opinion that will provide a satisfactory outcome for all those involved.

In this example an individual uses the institution of age-sets to his own particular ends. The age-set ensures the carrying out of the course of action which Sarengei seeks. However Sarengei's success is partly dependent upon two other factors. First, Sarengei's standing in the community strengthens his case. Spencer (1988: 143) notes that he was dignified and popular. This suggests that Sarengei's fellow elders were willing to listen to his case because he would not seek their assistance without good reason. Second, his case is a valid one because the welfare of his family depends upon the outcome. If he is unable to get his sons prematurely promoted to elderhood then there is less chance of the family being able to provide for themselves. Added to this his own son wishes to have the promotion take place. Any potential conflict is therefore not between father and son but rather between the father and the age-group of moran. The logical way to handle such a situation is therefore through the age-set system. But it ought also to be noted that Sarengei actually checks the mood of those around him before even beginning to try and gain support for his case, just as *ilaiguenak* check the mood before a meeting and before they summarise the feeling of the participants at a meeting. Part

of the reason Sarengei succeeds in his endeavour is therefore because he assesses the prevailing mood before he officially involves others.

The examples in this section show how one individual can influence the feelings within an age-set and hence use that body of opinion in order to achieve desired ends. Two things appear crucial to the successful implementation of such a strategy. These are the social standing of the individual making the request and the importance of appealing for a consensus of opinion on the matter. In the latter case, if an individual is able to show that their point of view is backed by others, especially as that might be represented by the age-set, then the chances of succeeding in one's endeavours improve. In the cases cited here the representatives of the set deem the request as legitimate. This means that the group, by supporting the case, are implying a broader consensus of opinion on the matter. The group therefore pressure the protagonist into taking the advice of others, rather than becoming subject to sanctions. The cases cited above show that the pressure to conform to the majority view is often sufficient motivation to resolve conflicts which have previously eluded settlement.

The consensus of opinion of a group, such as that of an age-set, can be a powerful coercive force. Age-sets therefore have the potential to play a significant role as arbiters in the resolution of disputes. But it is not a pre-ordained function of the age-set to intervene in these affairs. This role of the age-set only comes into being when an individual approaches the age-set for assistance. It is also important to note that the age-sets do not form a uniform group. The age-sets do not unite together against a protagonist in a dispute. There are differences of opinion between the age-sets, just as there are differences of opinion between individuals. This factor is also crucial in the successful involvement of an age-set in an affair because success in one's endeavour may be dependent upon which age-set is approached. One must be able to discern which age-set is likely to be sympathetic towards one's case, as the example of Sarengei shows. Thus there are limits to the apparent power of the age-sets because others can manipulate the ideals held by an age-set to gain backing for a cause. Age-sets are only likely to take up an issue at their own instigation if it directly pertains to an age-mate and, as Episodes 1 and 3 showed, this does not always achieve success from the age-set's point of view.

The examples given in this section suggest that it is not possible to view the age-sets as dominating the political process in *IlOitai*, or Maasai

society, in the way that some authors have suggested. For example, Talle (1988: 91) views the age-set system as an "ideological vehicle promoting male dominance and inequality between men and women" and adds that because women are not a part of this system they are "by definition, subordinate to men in all aspects of cultural subtlety" (1988: 94). Llewelyn-Davies (1981) sees a link between female subordination and an age organisation where elders have control of the resources, a position which she says the women share with the moran, while in an earlier paper she described the "adulterous" love affairs of women as "undermining the hierarchial [*sic*] basis of ... the age-set system" (Llewelyn-Davies 1978: 207).

These comments imply that there exists an inherent inequality between the sexes in Maasai society that goes with the age-set system. However, if women are able to influence the course of events, despite the decisions reached by an age-set meeting, then this would suggest that one cannot consider power to be in the hands of the age-sets to the exclusion of other members of society. Rather the key to understanding politics in Maasai society is a recognition of the different domains in which males and females operate.

It is clear from the discussion of Maasai society that the focus of women's concerns is the household and the successful maintenance of the domestic unit. Women therefore concentrate their efforts on seeing that this objective can be and is achieved. It is only under extreme provocation that women are likely to take the ultimate and destructive step of leaving home as a protest to the actions of their husbands. Men, on the other hand, enter the social grouping of the age-set. It is through the age-set that they establish friendships, stock associations, marriage links between their sons and daughters, and in some cases residential units. Men spend a great deal of their time, especially during the rainy season, visiting fellow age-mates and attending the ceremonies of their age-mates and their families. As adult males the focus of their concerns is therefore the age-set.

To talk of the women and *ilmurran* as being subordinate to the elders is therefore to misconstrue the nature of Maasai society; just as setting up a dichotomy according to which women are to children as men are to cattle, is misleading. The former argument ignores the fact that different people have different domains in which they can most effectively exert their influence while the latter assumes that ownership equals control.

The nature of Maasai society is such that no simple formula can be used to reduce the relationships between people, or between people and objects, to ones based on power and authority.

Whether, therefore, an individual resorts to using an age-set in order to achieve a desired end is a matter of the nature of the dispute and the perceived appropriateness of involving them in order to achieve a resolution. For the individual, involving an age-set is a matter of strategy. To perceive these acts in terms of power relationships and positions of subordination is to misunderstand the political process for *IlOitai* and Maasai society.

5.2 Influence at the Collective Level

In the previous section I considered the ways in which individuals are able to influence the course of events. The examples given of dispute resolution involving age-sets, at the behest of the individual, showed that consensus by numbers is a powerful means by which the course of events can be influenced.

It is therefore not surprising to find that consensus by numbers is the motivating force behind the major ritual transformations in Maasai society. This is especially true in the formation of new age-groups. Acceptance of the formation of a new age-group involves the boys in persuading the elders that the time is ripe for the opening of a new circumcision period. The process of incorporation, following circumcision, requires no further collective action to persuade others of the need for change. But the build up to the acceptance of group change is a necessary precursor to the transformation of boys into *ilmurran*. It is through *ilamala*, or deputations, that boys cause a change in public opinion.

Ilamala are deputations of individuals who have a common purpose. They form under a variety of circumstances. Their size and nature vary and they do not only occur when boys wish to persuade the elders they want to become *ilmurran*.

The best known deputations are those that involve large numbers of people at such events as *enkipaata* ('the dance' as a prelude to opening a circumcision period), *olkishoroto* (lit. 'the levy', or the women's mobbing) and *inkamulak oo nkituaak* (lit. 'the spittle of the women', or the women's fertility blessing). These delegations usually involve several hundred

people. For example, Mol (n.d.: 173) counted 876 women at the 1976 *IlOitai inkamulak oo nkituaak*. But small groups of individuals may also form *ilamala* as either a build up to one of the major deputations listed above or for a specific purpose that is of local concern. For example, women may form *olamal* in order to sing and pray to God for rain during a drought, boys may form *olamal* to gain acceptance for a lion hunt (*olamayio*) and *ilmurran* form *ilamala* in order to collect cattle for *oloiboni* who will divine for *eunoto*. But the intention of *ilamala* is always the same: to make public a statement about the desire on the part of the group for action or change.

To gain an idea of how these communal groups operate, I shall give a brief description of the three large delegations mentioned above of *enkipaata*, *olkishoroto* and *inkamulak oo nkituaak*. *Enkipaata* is a ceremony at which young boys perform a special dance and at which the new age-set of *olpiron* kindle a fire and remove the curse on male circumcisions. *Enkipaata* is the name of the specific dance performed at the ceremony, as well as at *eunoto* (Galaty 1983; Spencer 1988: 160, 170 fn. 7). Every section of the Maasai marks a new circumcision period with the ceremony of *enkipaata*. Before the ceremony takes place there is a build up of smaller delegations of boys seeking the approval of their sponsors for the event. Once this acceptance is gained the control of the ceremony of *enkipaata* enters into the hands of the new firestick elders. Galaty and Lembuyia (1984: 14-16) describe the formation of the deputation by the firestick elders in order to organise the ceremony of *enkipaata*. The new fire-stick elders guide the performance of the ritual which involves meat feasting, singing, dancing and the giving of blessings. Another feature of the ceremony is the involvement of barren women who it is believed will become fertile through the blessings they receive during the ceremony (Galaty & Lembuyia 1984; Spencer 1988: 70).

Inkamulak oo nkituaak, or the women's blessing, is a ritual that occurs approximately every four years in *IlOitai*. It is a blessing that is performed to increase the fertility of the women. Preceding the ritual, smaller delegations of women travel around the country seeking gifts from rich Maasai, and singing and dancing. The women make all the preliminary arrangements for *inkamulak oo nkituaak* and choose the male who will lead the ritual blessing. This is either an elder who is respected or *oloiboni*. Once the person is chosen the arrangements are in the hands of the man and

his age-mates. The ritual is a blessing at which there is meat feasting, beer drinking, singing and dancing and at which the women are blessed.

Olkishoroto, or the women's mobbing, is a slightly different occasion. There is no build up before *olkishoroto* of *ilamala* travelling the countryside. *Olkishoroto* is performed by a group of women on either a man or a woman when it is suspected that a still-birth has resulted from the breaking of sexual prohibitions during pregnancy. *Olkishoroto* involves a group of women, bare from the waist up and carrying sticks, who go to the house of and beat up the offender while they make abusive comments and sing aggressive songs. The women also claim an animal from the family herd. This is the levy after which the ceremony is named. The animal is slaughtered and the women eat the meat. The occasion is a tense one and quite different in mood from that of *inkamulak oo nkituaak* when the women are excited and happy.

One further sort of delegation should be described before the nature of these events is looked at more closely. This is *empikas* (pl. *impikasin*). *Empikas* is a delegation that is willing to use force to achieve its ends. Ole Mpaayei (1954: 53 fn. 14) describes it as "a raiding force large enough to warrant full [military] equipment"; by Spencer (1988: 294) as a "posse"; and by Ole Sankan (1971: 41) as "an aggressive delegation". *Ilmurran* usually perform *impikasin* but Ole Sankan (1971: 42) states that elders may also undertake it if there is sufficient need. *Empikas* is an armed group of raiders who seize specific things. For example, in the case of *ilmurran*, they perform *empikas* in order to seize fellow moran and their mothers for a manyata. Spencer (1988: 86) says that this is common amongst *IlMatapato* because the moran do not live permanently in *imanyat* and have to recruit members before they can gain agreement from the elders to build them. The raiding occurs without the approval of the firestick patrons or the fathers of the moran and the hostages are taken to a temporary camp (Spencer 1988: 87). Eventually the pressure becomes so great that the elders agree to the building of *emanyata*.

The distinction that people usually make between *olamal* and *empikas* is that the former is a peaceful and unarmed delegation while the latter is a violent and armed delegation. For example, Spencer (1988: 213) says:

> "The powers of moral coercion of an unarmed ritual delegation [*olamal*] contrast with the physical powers of the armed posse [*empikas*], rather as ... women's fertility

> gatherings contrast with their mobbings. ... They represent two types of coercion associated with contrasting moods."

But the purposes of the two styles of delegation are not necessarily different as Spencer's own data show. Spencer (1988: 214, Case 46) describes the case of a peaceful delegation of *IlNyankusi* age-set who were collecting cattle off their age-mates. These cattle were for the ritual expert as payment for advice on a sacrifice. Many of the age-mates sought to keep their animals on the grounds that they were suffering hardship. Because the delegation had not persuaded these men to donate animals they "lost credibility as a coercive force, and others turned their coercion against them with similar appeals" (Spencer 1988: 214). The delegation took off their ritual attire and reformed as an armed posse. As a posse they raided and seized the cattle they wanted from their age-mates. Spencer (1988: 214) notes that *IlNyankusi* adopted the option of mounting an armed posse in preference to using their curse. I shall return to this latter point shortly.

Spencer's example illustrates how a peaceful delegation can become an aggressive one if those who are being asked to co-operate refuse to do so. But this element of potential violence is not only found in an example such as this. Llewelyn-Davies (1978: 228) for instance, cites the case of a group of women attempting to mount *olkishoroto* before *inkamulak oo nkituaak* which the elders then stopped by cursing the beer the women had brewed for the occasion. Talle (1988: 115) also describes women who are on *olamal* as having "a reputation for being active sexually" and adds "they can be very aggressive". Both authors describe the women on *ilamala* prior to *inkamulak oo nkituaak* as grabbing men whom they meet in the bush and forcing them to have sexual intercourse. In addition, *ilamala* of boys prior to *enkipaata*, act fiercely towards women if they meet them outside *inkang'itie*. This suggests that all delegations, while not necessarily carrying the symbolic markers of aggression, such as spears or beating sticks, have the potential to become violent depending on the way in which they are treated. The people who are on *ilamala* are always in a highly excitable state and so it is easy for the mood to change from being peaceful to militant. In aggressive deputations it is the implements people carry that symbolise the nature of the deputation and its right to take by force. The participants in peaceful *ilamala*, on the other hand, are unarmed and do not bear the symbols of threatening behaviour. But whether the deputation is *olamal* or *empikas*, the aim remains the same: to bring about a change in attitude in the wider community. While the purpose of the two types of

delegation is the same the style is different. *Ilamala* use moral persuasion to achieve change while *impikasin* use physical coercion. Transforming from a peaceful to a forceful delegation depends upon the reaction of the community to the deputation's purpose.[2]

I now return to the issue of *IlNyankusi* deciding to approach their age-mates as an armed posse rather than to curse them (Spencer 1988: 214). Spencer (1988: 210) makes the general observation that elders acknowledge they prefer to mount a posse than to use their curse. I discussed curses in Chapter 4 and showed that a curse has the potential to disrupt social order. It is therefore not surprising that a posse is a preferred technique for dealing with the unwillingness of others to co-operate with the intentions of the delegates. In fact the power of delegations lies in their ability to bless and curse. Galaty and Lembuyia (1984: 13), for example, say that "members of *olamal* ... are especially feared, for they have a strong power both of blessing and cursing". The blessing and curse of *ilamala* are believed to be particularly efficacious. The involvement of barren women in the proceedings of *enkipaata* illustrates the power of the blessing. Barren women receive the blessing because its power is believed to extend beyond those boys who will be circumcised and become *ilmurran*. The blessing of *olamal* is therefore more potent than that of an individual in bringing about, for example, the pregnancy of a barren woman.

The curse of *olamal* can also be seen as extremely potent. The example given above of the elders re-assembling as a posse when they needed cattle rather than curse their age-mates shows this, as does the comment made by the elders that they prefer to form as *empikas* rather than curse people. Added to this, Spencer (1988: 213) says that "the ritual delegation go beyond mere requisition and the possibility of their curse is invidious if their anger is aroused". The power of the curse is also indicated by the fact that the posse is perceived as the preferred technique of *ilmurran*, who are thought of as uncontrollable and therefore too irresponsible to use the curse appropriately. Women on *inkamulak oo inkituaak* also have a powerful curse (Llewelyn-Davies 1978: 225). The

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[2]. I accept that *impikasin*, when they use force, are no longer relying on persuasion by influence. In these cases the deputation is using power, as Spencer's (1988: 214) case of the men forcefully taking cattle illustrates. However, as with the curse, it is the threat of the action (i.e. using force) that is usually sufficient incentive for *impikasin* to gain people's co-operation.

reasons behind the power of the curses and blessings of *ilamala* are worth investigating.

In the case of *olamal* of the firestick elders that precedes *enkipaata* Galaty and Lembuyia (1984: 14) make the point that the delegation wields substantial power and influence because it represents "the best members of the age-set and its collective will". This is the crux of the matter. A delegation, simply because of the numbers of people involved, either in the delegation itself, or in those who back it, represents generally accepted ideals. When boys form *ilamala* in sufficient numbers then others must recognise that it is time to allow them to become *ilmurran*. In the same way, when women form *ilamala* in sufficient numbers, the men must recognise that it is time for them to allow *inkamulak oo nkituaak* to take place. The delegations are the visible signs of an underlying feeling amongst a particular sector of the population that a concern that they hold dear should be addressed. Whether the delegation is peaceful or not depends upon the response of those who are being appealed to for support in bringing about change. But the ability of the delegation to influence the course of events is based upon the fact that a delegation is tangible, visible evidence of significant dissension. One group of people, by their numbers, seeks to influence the course of events. But the significance of deputations, in a society that discourages dissent, lies in the 'power' of numbers. If enough people support the change then it becomes inevitable that the remainder will also agree. Not to do so would lead to open conflict. It is therefore not surprising that Spencer (1988: 213) notes amongst *IlMatapato* that these delegations are described as being "heavy" or "pregnant". This is because they anticipate what becomes an inevitable change.

Spencer (1988) argues *ilamala* are necessary because the elders are reluctant to have their sons promoted through the age-set system. This is because, in a polygynous society like that of the Maasai, young men are potential competitors for wives. He (1988: 7) concludes that "the perpetuation of the age system depends as much on women as on men". This he explains in terms of their role in "rituals of rebellion", together with the moran, in "defending the system from the danger of power corrupted by older men" (1988: 7). The suggestion that Spencer (1988: 207-209) makes is that it is through *olkishoroto*, the women's mobbing, that women are able to act as a moral force in opposition to the men. He parallels the delegations of boys in the build up to *enkipaata* with the delegations of

women in the build up to *inkamulak oo nkituaak* and sees female activity through *ilamala* and *olkishoroto* as forming the basis for their role as "the ultimate custodians of the morality underpinning the system" (1988: 209).

Llewelyn-Davies takes a different point of view. While she (1978: 228) believes that women, when they are involved in *inkamulak oo nkituaak*, are enforcing their right to "police" the "rules which protect children from the sexuality of the parental generation" this can rarely be done "without the consent of the elders" and that "the women lose control of the whole affair" once a male is chosen to give the blessing. She uses as an example the refusal of *oloiboni* in the 1972 *IlOitai inkamulak oo nkituaak* to allow non-laibon women to participate because they had "thrown away all respect" (1978: 22). Although the women pleaded with the laibon he refused to let them be involved and the blessing proceeded without them. The implication being, in Llewelyn-Davies eyes, that the men dominate the women. But this is to misunderstand the nature of delegations as political process. The delegation is rather about bringing to public attention a concern that people feel should be rectified by a particular sector of the community. By the time the community has agreed with the delegation that a course of action should be taken, the purpose of the delegation has been achieved. What happens thereafter is no longer in the hands of the deputation. This is because the required changes can only be achieved by a different group of people to those forming the delegation: for example, firestick elders opening a circumcision period for boys, a man blessing women in the fertility ritual, God providing rain, people donating cattle to be given to *oloiboni* and so on.

The delegation is therefore about persuasion, through consensus of opinion, where the persuasion is achieved through the formation of a communal group. These delegations can range from small impromptu groupings to large gatherings based on existing categories such as an age-set. However, they are most likely to form amongst individuals who would not otherwise be perceived as forming a prior categorical grouping. This is because it is amongst such individuals that the need is likely to be greatest for the group to take a visible form before it can gain acceptance of its point of view. But once they do form into a deputation they become a significant factor in the political process because their views can no longer be ignored. It then simply becomes a matter of time before the delegation's wishes are accepted and the appropriate action is taken.

Let me summarise the argument presented so far in this section of the chapter. An individual need is handled at the level of the individual unless the concerns expressed by that individual are also the concerns of the wider community. Then there is a movement towards collective action based on the process of the formation of *olamal* or *empikas*. The outcome of these actions is some form of ritual transformation that re-establishes order.

Voshaar (1979: 86-87) has described the whole process as one of crisis, awareness of the crisis, focusing attention on the crisis and then resolving the crisis through a ceremony. In this scenario, the stages for boys becoming moran would be: boys wanting to become moran and forming delegations to make the elders aware of this fact, elders accepting the demands of the boys and organising *enkipaata*, the performance of *enkipaata* and finally the lifting of restrictions on male circumcision. Voshaar (1979: 86) has used the word "crisis" and Spencer (1988: 213) has talked of "coercion" in relation to these activities. Both authors imply that conflict is an element of delegation formation and persuasion. But one should remember that the delegation is an accepted 'institutional' means by which people can resolve conflicts of interest. The process and the ritual transformation that they lead to are a part of accepted social practice. One should therefore not see delegations as exceptional or abnormal activities. They are simply one more way in which the Maasai practise influential politics.

5.3 Influence in Ritual

There is one further area of social activity I wish to consider before completing the discussion on influence. This is ritual. Ritual pervades the social existence of all sections of the Maasai and acts as one of the unifying features across sections. This is especially true for rituals that relate to the age-sets.

Usually ceremonies centre on people, rather than places, events or time. The focus of a ritual can be on an individual, as in the case of name-givings, circumcisions or *olkiteng' loo lbaa* (lit. 'the ox of the wounds') and usually, but not always, these rituals relate to an individual's position in the life cycle (see Chapter 3). The other major focus of ritual attention is ceremonies relating to men as members of an age-group or age-set. These

are the ceremonies that contribute to the formation of an age-set such as *enkipaata*, *eunoto* and *enkang' oo lorikan*. In these cases the celebration of the ritual is a communal activity.

Just as the life cycle follows a similar pattern for males and females up to circumcision, so does the pattern of ritual events that relate to the child. However after circumcision there is a major divergence between the rituals pertaining to the two sexes because age-sets enter into the context of male ritual concerns. This means that while the early ritual life of a child focuses on transformations in the life cycle, and this remains a life-long concern for the women, post-circumcision ritual for men focuses on the creation of an age-set.

Once a man joins an age-set he is no longer the focus of major ritual attention other than for the performance of *olkiteng' loo lbaa* before his first child is circumcised. However, as a member of an age-set, which will ultimately become *olpiron* to the alternate age-set below, a man has an important role to play in the successful creation of the nascent age-set. For many men, the role of *olpiron* may largely signify acting as negotiators and advisers. But the period as *olpiron* also helps to sustain the communal identity of the age-set, at a time when a man becomes increasingly preoccupied with the management of his herds.

In the case of women, it is often considered that their role in ritual events becomes peripheral following on from circumcision. Llewelyn-Davies (1981: 343), for instance, suggests that after circumcision "there are no further rites of passage held directly on behalf of women, although as wives and mothers they have important roles to play in some of the men's rituals". This is not strictly true in the case of *IlOitai* because the drinking of *olpurda* by a woman, following giving birth and before marriage (see Chapter 3) is an occasion when a woman is the focus of a ritual practice that is also a rite of passage. Also, while marriage is not a ritual performed "directly on behalf of women" (Llewelyn-Davies 1981: 343), the bride is still a key player in the event.[3]

However for the most part women, once married, are no longer the foci of ritual attention and their role in ceremonies revolves around their position as either a wife or a mother.

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[3]. A woman may also be the focus of the ritual practice of *olkishoroto*.

The implication of Llewelyn-Davies' work is that this removal of women from the centre stage of ritual activity, following on from circumcision, isolates them from the decision-making process and therefore undermines their independence. The question becomes, therefore, one of whether being able to wield either power or influence in a ritual context requires that one be the focus of attention at that ritual.

The best way of approaching this problem is by looking at what happens at a Maasai ceremony. Descriptions of rituals usually focus on those aspects of the event that can be described as concrete events: the shaving of hair, the slaughtering of an animal, the blessing of a person, the circumcision of a boy or girl and so on. However these descriptions belie the very nature of Maasai rituals.

A contrast can be drawn between the formal and controlled way in which, for example, a wedding takes place in Western culture and the way in which rituals occur in Maasailand. First, in our own society the attention of those attending the wedding focuses on the actions of the couple being married and the person who is officiating at the ceremony. There is, for example, no room for intervention in this process by those attending the wedding ceremony, other than in a ritualised context when the congregation are asked if there is any reason why the two people should not marry. In Maasai ceremonies there may be several things happening at the same time. For example, the elders may be eating meat out in the bush, the younger men and older boys may be dancing outside *enkang'* surrounded by the girls, and the women may be slaughtering a sheep at *kutuk-aji* of a house. This multi-faceted nature of Maasai ritual means two things. First that there is always room for confusion over the sequence of events that go to make up a ritual because different people are doing different things at different times, and second that the procedure to be followed for each individual element of the ritual event may also be questioned because in most cases there is no single person acting as a 'master of ceremonies'. Maasai ritual therefore often appears totally confusing to the uninitiated. To give some sense of the apparently disorganised nature of Maasai ritual I give here a description of the slaughtering of a sheep following a circumcision:

EPISODE 8.

A boy had been circumcised in the morning and in the afternoon the women slaughtered a sheep. The sheep was killed at *kutuk-aji* (entrance to house) in the boy's

mother's house and people were constantly passing in and out of the house while it was happening. The entrance to the calf pen was laid on the ground and a white ram was dragged out of the pen. The sheep was then laid on a mat and before it was suffocated a debate ensued over what should be used to suffocate it with. While this went on the sheep did quite a lot of struggling and the woman holding it had to keep readjusting her grip in order to stop it from escaping.

In the end the women decided to use an old piece of cloth to suffocate it and Seiyan held the cloth over its mouth while two other women held down its legs. While the sheep was being muffled several drunken men passed in and out of the house seeking *olkumpau* (tobacco), *emakate* (Magadi soda) and *enaisho* (beer). When the sheep had been successfully suffocated the next debate that arose was how the carcass should be bled. The women called the grandmother of the house and asked her to do it because no one else was clear on the appropriate procedure.

She located the jugular vein and cut it with a knife while Seiyan moved to sitting on a chair so that she could hold the carcass above a small *olkukuri* (calabash) into which the blood drained. The calabash was then placed at the side of *kutuk-aji* while the women debated how the carcass should be cut up. The carcass was then lifted onto some branches of *olmisigiyioi* (*Rhus natalensis*) and skinned by slicing down the stomach region, around the neck and across the knees (the knee joints had been broken). One woman passed through the entrance while this was happening and told the women doing the work that they were doing it incorrectly and that there should have been more of the skin kept as one piece. The women involved said that they were doing it as best they could and she could take over if she liked. She refrained, saying that she was searching for beer.

After the animal had been skinned the underlying layer of fat was sliced off. Work came to a halt when a woman with a badly bleeding finger appeared from the other circumcision that had taken place in *enkang'* the same day. A discussion now arose as to how best the bleeding finger could be treated. In the end one woman suggested that it was important to stop the flow of blood and that therefore the finger should be bound. At this stage the two women left and attention again focused on the carcass.

The meat was then cut up while the discussion about procedure continued unabated. Now whoever passed by seemed to take a hack at the carcass and various women

> came and went as the stomach was taken outside to be drained and other women stopped work to get some beer to drink. Finally the meat was cut up and laid on *olkiloriti* (*Acacia xanthophloea*) to be taken into the house to be cooked.
>
> Then another old woman entered the house and asked why the intestines had not been cleaned. The women present said that they did not know how to do it and so the old woman sat down and meticulously started to work all the half-digested grass along the intestine until she could remove it and turn the intestine inside out to wash it.
>
> By this stage the generally chaotic atmosphere at *kutuk-aji* had subsided because most of the work had been done and the meat had been taken away to be roasted. The women who had been helping in the suffocation, skinning and cutting up of the meat drifted off in search of beer, meat, friends and any other happening that might catch their attention.

The Episode shows how discussion is as much a part of ritual as it is of everyday discourse amongst the Maasai. At every ceremony that I attended there was always a debate about procedure and the appropriateness of particular actions to the event that was taking place.[4]

In another example, on the afternoon of the day when a girl is circumcised, her mother leads her out of *enkang'* and sits her on a skin. The girl then displays her modified genitalia for inspection by the women present. This enables the women to check whether the girl has been correctly circumcised. No matter what the circumcision is like there is always a discussion amongst the women as to whether the operation has been done correctly. The debate usually moves between the operator and the girl's mother (who may be one and the same person) defending the operation and all the other women who come to look and usually criticise it. During these proceedings the girl is usually in tears while she sits passively on the skin with her legs apart. But following this debate it is unlikely that the girl will be re-circumcised even if there was initial disagreement about the success of the operation.

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[4]. This is comparable with Spencer's (1965: 243) description of a Samburu 'wedding' where a discussion of the principles of marriage is interspersed with the marriage ceremony itself.

This suggests that it is the discussion about the operation that is more important than the assessment by the women as to whether it has been done correctly. The circumcision takes place at dawn and the only women likely to be present are those living or staying in *enkang'* where it is performed. By mid-afternoon, however, there will be many more women visiting from the surrounding *inkang'itie*. The display therefore enables a large group of women to inspect and discuss the girl's modified genitalia. The discussion provides the women with the opportunity to reach a consensus of opinion on the operation.

At other ritual events people also discuss procedure. For example, during Galaty and Lembuyia's (1984) description of *IlKeekonyokie enkipaata*, preceding the formation of a new age-group, examples are given of people forming groups to discuss how a particular aspect of the ritual should be carried out or the appropriateness of a particular approach to the ritual. For example, discussions revolve around: who should be present at a large decision-making meeting (p. 37), whether the ceremony can take place without *olaiguenani* of *Seuri* age-set (the final name given to the age-set of *IlDeregaiyani*) (pp. 37-39), what should be done on the first day of *enkipaata* (p. 40), whether *enaabooshoke* (the heart and lungs from a slaughtered animal) should be served to the boys as part of their ritual feast (pp. 40-43), who will form *ilmeij enkima* ("delegation-which-will-not-sit-by-the-fire") (p. 51), what are appropriate blessings for the ceremony (p. 74), and when the ceremony should end (pp. 77-78).

I gave another example of this process of debating procedure at a ritual in Chapter 4 (p. 111). In this case the discussion related to the performance of *endung'ore* which marks the end of a circumcision period for boys. The elders who wished to perform the ceremony said that they did not know how to do it because they had not done it for many years. *Olaiguenani* of an older age-set was present and he described the ceremony giving three alternative ways of performing it. The elders then "discussed on the matter at length" before deciding which of the three possible ways of performing *endung'ore* they would follow (Holford-Walker 1949 - KNA DC/NRK 1/3/1).

These examples show that discussion and debate are an integral part of the ritual process for the Maasai.[5] The significance of this process is

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[5]. This discussion and debate at rituals may also help to explain why there are so many apparent discrepancies in different descriptions of Maasai rituals. Because there is

well described by *Ole* Teeka, in a discussion about whether the boys of *olamal* at the 1983 *IlKeekonyokie enkipaata* should be given *enaabooshoke* to eat, when he says: "'We are discussing these issues because we are trying to get the best and most appropriate things in life, and only discussion can bring about a single resolution.'" (Galaty and Lembuyia 1984: 42). Discussion at rituals therefore provides an opportunity for people to present a variety of views regarding the way in which to perform a ritual. The intention is then to reach a consensus of opinion on procedure. However, the whole nature of Maasai social interaction means that reaching a consensus of opinion cannot be achieved by a simple agreement between individuals: rather, a consensus is achieved only when there has been a dialogue and debate about the matter under consideration.

The parallels between discussing issues at a ritual and, for example, at an age-set meeting are clear. In both instances individual opinion is sought and it is only after there has been a debate about a procedure that a possible consensus of opinion can be reached as to the appropriate course of action to be taken. Thus while individual adult men and women may not be the focus of a ritual event, the fact that they have the opportunity to comment on the course of the ritual provides them with the potential to influence the ritual event. It also suggests that the discussion itself must be considered as a necessary and important component of the successful completion of rituals.

Discussion is therefore as important a part of ritual as it is of normal everyday life. This is not to deny that in order for one's opinion to have weight at ritual events requires that one's position is backed up by power (cf. Bell 1975: 25; Jacobs 1965: 15). One could argue that while women may express an opinion at rituals, their position means that others can ignore their opinions with impunity. This is not the case.

From the earlier description of Maasai rituals one can see that even the simplest of rituals involves a number of different activities that require the input of many people. For example, the drinking of beer and the eating of meat are two of the most commonly occurring aspects to Maasai ritual. These two elements might be described as providing an 'auspicious' atmosphere for a ritual and certainly a great deal of discussion goes on after

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always a debate about procedure at rituals, there is also the possibility that this will lead to a changing public view of the appropriate procedure that ought to be followed.

a ritual as to whether there was enough beer and food for people to 'satisfy' their thirst and hunger. It is on this basis that those who were present at a ritual assess the success or otherwise of the event. If these two are taken as examples, they can loosely be split into a male concern with the slaughter of animals for the meat feasting and a female concern with the brewing of the beer.

Brewing beer is an entirely female domain. Women usually help each other in both the collection of water and in the provision of containers for the brewing of the beer. In the days leading up to a ceremony, if women brew a large quantity of beer, then they distribute the task between several households. People use honey only to brew small quantities of beer and only if the honey is available. However most ceremonies require large quantities of beer and in the Ilkerin area it is now common to buy sugar for this purpose. If this is the case then a woman's husband will sell an animal in order to buy the sugar.

Men usually do the slaughtering of animals at a ceremony. However, there are occasions on which women will also slaughter an animal. For example, while the men go to *olpul* in the bush to slaughter a steer at a circumcision, the women slaughter a sheep at *kutuk-aji* (see Episode 8, pp. 147-149). On some occasions a calf may replace the sheep. While the men provide the animals slaughtered at rituals women may have some say in which animals are used. For example, if it is suggested that an animal from a woman's allotted herd be used then she may give reasons as to why this should not be done.

Thus by simply looking at the logistics of providing beer and meat at a ceremony one can see that the responsibility is a shared one between men and women. Neither men nor women dominate the process. While the men are usually the source of the materials used for the provisions, the labour of the women is a necessary and integral part of the process. Consequently there tends to be a balancing out of male and female views as to what should occur at rituals. For instance, it is not uncommon for the father and the mother of a child who is being circumcised to disagree about whom beer should be distributed to, just as there may be disagreement as to who should get meat to eat at a ceremony. Therefore, in those ceremonies that are family-based, like circumcisions and name-givings, there is the potential for both the mother and father of the child to influence the course

of events because both adults are in control of different resources that are essential to the successful completion of the ceremony.

There is also an equivalence between the sexes in symbolic terms. This is because women shave the heads of the participants while men give the blessings. At some point before or during most rituals women (either as mothers or wives) shave the hair of the participants. Men never do this. While men usually give the blessings at rituals there are occasions when the older women (of *intomonok* or *intasati* status) may also participate. For example, at name-givings it is common for women to give blessings to the newly-named child. Once again it is not possible to see the role of women in these ritual events as subordinate to that of men.

The logistics of arranging age-set rituals is no different to that of the family-based ceremonial events of the Maasai. They involve a variety of activities with different people participating in different aspects of the ritual. Thus, while *olpiron* are the officiators at age-set rituals, the same room for manoeuvre and manipulation exists as at other ceremonies because of the diverse nature of each event.

Women, as mothers, play an additionally crucial role in the major age-set rituals as the builders of the ceremonial villages or *imanyat*. Women build *imanyat* for all the major age-set rituals, such as *enkipaata*, *eunoto* and *enkang' oo lorikan* or *olng'esher*.[6] In *IlOitai* these villages differ from *inkang'itie* because there is no fence enclosing the houses (Andersen 1977: 43, 174; Jacobs 1965: 305).[7] The houses are so close together that pulling *oltim* (branches of a tree) into the gaps between the houses at night creates an enclosed space. This presents an interesting contrast with *inkang'itie* where men and women must co-operate in the establishment of a new settlement: men build the fences while women build the houses.

Women also construct any other structures contained within *imanyat*. Thus the calf pen (*olale*) where the moran eat roast meat and are blessed, and, in the case of *eunoto*, the hut called *osinkira* (pl. *isinkiran*) are constructed by the mothers of the moran. Thus for the major age-set rituals

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[6]. In *IlOitai imanyat* are also built for the celebration of *inkamulak oo nkituaak* (Mol n.d.: 173).

[7]. This is different to *IlMatapato*, for instance, where an outer fence is built enclosing all the huts in the ceremonial village (Spencer 1988: 155).

in *IlOitai* it is the women who create the social space within which the men perform the rituals. The mothers of the moran therefore play a major role in the preparation of age-set rituals through their roles as the brewers of the beer and as the builders of *imanyat*.

Thus, just as for the family-based rituals, so to is the involvement of the women a crucial factor in age-set rituals. One can see that their labour is as important a contributing factor as is that of the men to all ritual events. Episode 5 (p. 97) illustrated the significance of this involvement. In this instance the circumcision of the woman's son was delayed by her husband until she was present. The woman's return to her husband's *enkang'* was solely for the purpose of playing her part in the ceremony of the circumcision of her son. Once her son had recuperated from the operation and was *olmurrani* the woman returned to the home of her parents. As I have already noted, movement of women away from the homes of their husbands is not uncommon (see Chapter 3) and I discuss the broader implications of this withdrawal of labour in Chapter 6. What should be noted here is that the withdrawal of a woman's labour, both in terms of normal daily activity and ritual activity, is a powerful means by which women can sanction the behaviour and actions of others.

In this chapter I have shown that the use of influence permeates all aspects of *IlOitai* social existence. Not only does it pervade the way in which age-sets reach decisions, but it also pervades normal daily practice, both within the home and in the interactions of individuals with the age-sets. It is also a key factor in the successful completion of rituals where discussion and debate are as central to the rituals as are the specific acts that define them.

I have also shown that influence is a strategy used at either the personal or group level. The creation of communal groups on an informal basis in the form of *ilamala* is an accepted way in which to gain community support for a proposed change in the status of particular members of the community. One could call this form of group action a 'powerful' form of persuasion. But it is still a technique based on influence because the role of the group is to motivate others to proceed with an appropriate action. The members of *olamal* do not themselves control the events that will bring about the change.

Now that I have investigated the different ways in which people use influence it is time to look at how people gain political competence and use it in their daily lives.

CHAPTER SIX
POLITICAL COMPETENCE

In the previous two chapters I have shown that consensus and agreement form the basis of political activity in Maasai society. People perceive influence as a preferred way in which to resolve problems. This presupposes that all those with an interest in a debate are able to contribute to it. There are two assumptions that go with this. First, that communication is unrestricted between members of the community and second, that individuals do not alienate themselves from their fellow Maasai. If communication is unrestricted then everybody has the chance to give their opinion on a matter and so feel that they are a part of the political process. As long as individuals are in an area they try to keep the lines of communication open so that they can express opinions. Thus, in order for this system to work, there must be a commitment on the part of the people to maintain social links with others. In this chapter I explore the ways in which people do or do not maintain links with others and I discuss the socialisation of the young into these patterns of behaviour.

6.1 Discord and 'Negative' Emotions

An influential political style can only be effective if the people actively participate in the political process. Consensus is not possible without the active involvement of the population because any weight given to a decision depends upon people seeing it as representing public opinion (cf. Chapter 4). Consequently the continuing involvement of the individual is of crucial importance because involvement is the only way in which an individual has the means to act successfully upon, or influence the course of, proceedings. There is, therefore, an onus on individuals to behave in a way that does not create discord or alienate them from the social process. Once this is realised it becomes clear why the Maasai consider single family *inkang'itie* (Jacobs 1965: 222), and solitary family herds, as bad: both express a desire on the part of the family concerned to separate themselves off from their fellow Maasai.

But any form of behaviour that creates discord is potentially threatening to this process and is actively discouraged, as the following Episode shows:

EPISODE 9.

A friend from Australia came to see me in the field. She wanted to take some photographs to show my family. Before this I had found it difficult to get people's permission to take photographs. However on this occasion I could see a way around it. I consulted *Papa* about Kerin's wish and explained that Kerin wanted to take these photographs so that my family in Australia could see my Maasai family. *Papa* did not refuse this request and so we agreed that Kerin could take some family-group photographs. The same evening when the cows came home Kerin asked me if she could take a photograph of them. I said that I could see no problem with this and so she took some shots of our family's animals returning to *enkang'*.

Three days later *Ole* Ketasho came to our house and asked me about Kerin's photographs saying that his son had said she had taken a photograph of him and their cattle. I explained that she had only taken a photograph of our family's animals and he dropped the matter: when he left the house we were on amicable terms. Sometime later, as I was leaving our *enkang'* to go shopping, *Ole* Ngirrimpa called me over. He complained about Kerin's taking photographs of the cattle and said that it was bad because I had not asked for his permission. I was so angry, because by now it was obvious that various people were manipulating the situation, that I turned my back on him and walked away.

As we arrived back after doing the shopping *Ole* Ngirrimpa's first wife came rushing out to offer us some beer. I accepted and while we were drinking *Ole* Ngirrimpa came into the house and told me that *Ole* Ketasho had told him about the taking of the photographs. However he did not mind if we took photographs of his cattle because he knew that I was good (*eisidai*). What he did not like was that I had been angry (*engoro*) when he had talked to me and that I had just walked away from him. I explained that Kerin had only taken photographs of our cows. We had a drink together and by the end of it were good friends again.

It is clear here that my anger upset *Ole* Ngirrimpa and his immediate reaction was to bridge the rift that had developed between us. He approached this by offering me beer, through his wife. Thus, by accepting the beer I showed that I was no longer angry with him. Once I accepted the beer *Ole* Ngirrimpa could bring about a reconciliation between us before the cause of our dispute led to a deeper and more permanent rift.

Spencer (1988: 120-123, 131) has discussed anger, especially with regard to the behaviour of *ilmurran*, and sees anger as involving the displacement of a person's frustration or desire to attack another person. He adds that anger results from the paternalistic nature of Maasai society which restrains the moran in a way resembling Durkheim's idea of "the *conscience collective*" (Spencer 1988: 131). But while it is acceptable for moran to go into a fit and express their anger by either shivering (from verb *aikirikira*) or shaking (from verb *aposhoo*), other members of the society are expected to suppress such behaviour (Spencer 1988: 120).

It is clear from Episode 9 that people's concern with the expression of anger is because it has the potential to cause a rift between people. Anger openly shows that a person is frustrated by the actions or comments of others. It implies that the person is angry because they are unable to control the course of events and this in turn implies an underlying desire to use power as a way in which to convert others to one's point of view. One can therefore use it as a form of emotional blackmail: an individual can become angry in order to deny the accepted process by which decisions are reached. Consequently, the expression of anger is antithetical to normal social behaviour because it threatens the existence of a consensus of opinion. Whether one is talking about an interaction between only two people or between a large group of people is irrelevant. This is because the magnitude of the contravention of expected behaviour has no effect on the likely outcome.

But anger is not the only emotional reaction that the Maasai actively discourage. All expressions of what might be called 'negative' emotions are suppressed. Here, by negative emotions I mean those which cut an individual off from other people, rather than bring people together in a shared experience. This means that emotional reactions such as anger (*engoro*), grief and sadness (*osina*; pl. *isinaitim*) or hatred (*enkiba*; pl. *inkiban*) can be classed as negative emotions.[1]

IlOitai actively work at the suppression of negative emotions. For instance, one must not show signs of grief when a death occurs. If one cries on such an occasion then other people constantly tell the sufferer not to continue crying and every attempt is made to distract the person's

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[1]. I agree with Myers (1986: 106) when he says that emotions are socially constructed. The list of negative emotions I give therefore consists of terms where Maa words exist to cover the semantic field of the given English term.

attention from what is causing them distress. Attempts are made to involve the sufferer in other things and all sorts of promises are made as a means to achieving this end. Any form of emotional response that is likely to have a disruptive influence on social intercourse is therefore discouraged and from an early age children are taught to suppress these responses (cf. Mead and Bateson 1942 on the Balinese).

There are two sides to this reaction to negative emotions. Expressing negative emotions means that the individual withdraws from the social process because it causes alienation. It is also true to say that it is only when one is in a stable emotional state that it is possible to act as a successful negotiator. One has to be self-possessed in order to exert influence. Later in this chapter I shall explore the positive aspects of political competence. For the moment I shall pursue the impact of negative emotions in relation to the rifts that they can create between people.

IlOitai reaction to negative emotions is not surprising when one recognises that the impact of them can, and does, cause major splits within a community as the following example shows:

EPISODE 10.

Ng'oto Lerina left her husband and returned to the home of her father. She had two married daughters and her eldest son, Lerina, had passed through the 1980 *eunoto*. Lerina stayed at home, as did one other daughter, but his mother took with her the recently born baby. This was *Menye* Lerina's only wife and his own mother and brother's two wives shared the milking of the animals and the running of the household. *Menye* Lerina started drinking heavily and had an argument with his brother, who lived in the same *enkang'*. This led to a fight between the two of them and, as a result, *Menye* Lerina left our *enkang'* and disappeared. People said that he had gone to *Encore Emuny* and so his eldest son went in search of him. However he was unable to locate his father and returned to our *enkang'*. The son was now left in a position where he had to take full responsibility for the family's herds (his grandfather was still alive but senile) and moves were made to speed up his marriage by helping finance the circumcision of his bride-to-be. Shortly after I left the field I heard that *Menye* Lerina's brother had also disappeared and could not be found. This left Lerina as the only compos mentis adult male present in *Ole* Nkipai's section of *enkang'* which consisted of four households.

In this Episode the fight between the brothers profoundly affected all the family members who lived at *enkang' empaash* (Figs. 2 & 3, Houses 6, 7, 8 & 9). First the departure of the wife and then the husband disrupted one household. This left the son in control, with no mother present to assist him with the maintenance of the household and tasks such as milking and looking after his younger brothers and sisters. As a result of this his marriage was brought forward in order to recreate the domestic unit. When the other brother involved in the fight left he had no sons close to circumcision age (the eldest was about 9 years old) and left behind two young wives. Such households are vulnerable to outside intervention unless the women are particularly forceful. Consequently the fight between the brothers left three households in a difficult position and two of these households could have become de-stabilised as a result of outside interference.

This Episode clearly illustrates the potential fights have to de-stabilise social units. It shows that if discord is allowed to flourish then the very fabric of social relations is placed in jeopardy. Not only are potential avenues of interaction cut off, but there is also the potential for the discord to spread beyond those first affected, rather like a disease, and consequently impact on a far wider group of people.

In addition, this Episode shows why a fight between brothers can be so much more devastating than between more distant sorts of associates. A network of people with whom one can negotiate is something that is built up over a lifetime. Theoretically, the more allegiances that one has the greater one's security. But the one group of predetermined allegiances that one has access to are those based on kinship and marriage. The exchanges of stock that are made between affines and agnates are lost if there is a dispute that leads to the disruption of these ties. Thus while any form of conflict is disruptive, conflict with relatives is potentially more disruptive because it automatically affects a group of people with whom one has a strong set of obligations. In the case of agnates these ties cannot be re-created in any other way if they are broken.

A fight between brothers who live near to each other can cause a permanent split in a family and so lead to the reduced viability of a household. With a split, access to labour, and a whole series of interconnecting networks of association, are lost. For example, the combined efforts of a father and a mature son in sustaining the family's

herds are greater than in the case of either individual alone. In Episode 10 Lerina cannot call upon the age-set of his father for assistance as his father could if he were present. So while a young man may rely heavily upon his age-mates for support in a general sense, the presence of a father can increase the possibilities for the household simply because the father has his own set of alliances and allegiances with other men. This is obviously especially important for a young man in the period when he has recently undergone *eunoto* and is not yet an independent herd owner because the future of his herds are still intertwined with that of his father's animals.

One can also explore the impact of negative emotional reactions in relation to wife beating. In Chapter 3 I introduced the subject and noted that both Llewelyn-Davies (1981: 336) and Spencer (1988: 198) see wife beating as proof of a husband's right to treat his wives as if they were property. Talle (1988: 76) on the other hand, cautions against an interpretation of women as property. She suggests that a man cannot indiscriminately mistreat his wives or daughters without fear of sanctions being imposed upon him. This requires further explication.

Men say that they beat their wives when they are disobedient and Spencer (1988: 198) describes one elder as saying that "a man should tame a disobedient wife". The greatest fear amongst the elders is of relationships that their wives have with moran. This is also the major cause of beatings. Certainly public attention focuses on the women's relationships with moran. For example, in one instance at Ilkerin a man who had recently married his second wife caught her in the bush with a moran lover and beat her. This became public knowledge and people widely discussed it. But other beatings were generally not brought to the attention of the public. Llewelyn-Davies and Spencer also discuss wife beating largely in relation to women caught with moran. I shall consider the reasons why this particular relationship is so problematic in the next chapter. Here, I shall discuss the general phenomenon of wife beating and its significance as an emotional response to a problem.

For a man to beat a wife suggests that the man is unable to control the actions of his wife. While men might describe the beatings as necessary in order to control the actions of their wives, the male view gives a distorted impression of something much more basic. Important to any consideration of wife beating is the fact that it rarely achieves the desired ends of the man who does the beating, despite comments by Maasai elders

to the contrary (Spencer 1988: 198-199). In the Ilkerin area wives are not infrequently beaten by their husbands but these beatings are rarely severe enough for the physical signs to be visible to others (cf. Spencer 1988: 199). The women often laugh at the beatings given them by their husbands. When questioned about being beaten women shrug their shoulders and say that their husbands were angry and generally treat these events as unimportant. But if a man continually beats his wife, and she believes it is unjustified, then she will leave home. Once a woman leaves home there is the potential for a household unit to be de-stabilised, in the same way that this is possible when a man dies and leaves no circumcised sons. The most obvious consequence lies in the fact that there may be no adult female available to deal with the day-to-day tasks of milking the herds, maintaining the house and caring for the children. But if a woman leaves home then there is also the possibility that her action will have broader implications as Episode 10 (p. 158) shows. I have already pointed out that women not infrequently leave home. One should therefore not underrate a woman's leaving home as a way in which women can retaliate if they feel that a husband's violence towards them is unreasonable (Chapter 4 and also see Jacobs 1965: 213).

But the beatings exacerbate the lack of control that a man has over his wife because they show that the man himself lacks self control. If he beats his wife in "anger" (Spencer 1988: 198) then the man is displaying an emotional reaction that is socially unacceptable. The elders' view, therefore, that beating their wives is to control their actions, is simply an attempt to hide their own lack of self control in response to actions that are outside their control. It is not only men who beat their wives. Men also beat other men, often in drunken brawls, and women, when they perform *olkishoroto*, may beat either women or men who they believe have offended against the fertility of women. But it is the beating of women by their husbands that is given greatest prominence in the stories told by men. Wife beating is consequently no more acceptable than any other form of violence in Maasai society, because it has the potential to alienate people from each other and cause the breakdown of social relationships.

For a man to beat his wife is therefore problematic on two grounds. First, it shows a lack of control on the part of the man and second, it can ultimately lead to the breakdown of the family unit. To consider women as a form of property with which men can do as they like is to ignore the potential impact that a woman's actions can have when she leaves home.

The fact that women can withdraw their labour in response to being beaten shows that there are strategies open to them that they can use to counteract a man's anger. Women are therefore not helpless pawns in a power play by men and cannot be considered as property over which men have total control.

Because the act of cutting ties by moving house is such a powerful one women often use it as a way of making a symbolic statement about the way they feel (see Episodes 1 and 2, Chapter 3, pp. 70-71 and 71-72 respectively). In many cases the woman may move only one or two houses away from her home. The move may also only last for a few nights. Often in the sort of symbolic gesture of the type described in Episodes 1 and 2 the woman will have arranged for another woman (e.g. a friend, neighbour or female relative) to look after the house, thus avoiding any genuine hardship for the family. But the power of the symbolic statement lies in the woman withdrawing her labour from the domestic unit. Because it is women who milk, collect firewood, fetch water, cook, maintain the house, mind the children and care for young and sick stock their absence can disrupt the daily rhythm of pastoral activity. A woman can therefore use the gesture as a warning of what she will do if the dispute, which is usually with her husband, remains unresolved.

The successful use of the symbolic gesture lies in the fact that it draws public attention to a matter that had previously been a family affair. The result can be that public opinion comes out in support of the woman, so forcing the man to agree with her point of view, or it may leave the dispute unresolved. But if the latter occurs then there is an awareness amongst those involved in the dispute that the next time the woman withdraws her labour she may do so permanently. However the symbolic gesture usually has the desired effect of moderating a husband's actions. From the woman's point of view the significant thing is to know when 'moving away from home' is an appropriate act in order to maximise one's chances of achieving a desired end. It is not a tactic that can be regularly practised because this undermines the import of it. Rather women must use it on strategic occasions to make a point that they feel they cannot make in any other way.

In this section of the chapter the aim has been to show that any form of emotional response that has the potential to alienate individuals or disrupt social intercourse is problematic. Moranhood is the only exception to this pattern. In Chapter 3 I pointed out that moranhood involves the

young men in a set of practices that unites the group and establishes a sense of group solidarity. The practices that unite the group are often contrary to those practised outside the liminal context of being *ilmurran*. Spencer (1988: 120) explicitly links negative emotions with moranhood when he says that "anger is associated with the ideals of warriorhood" and moran are expected to use this anger to cultivate a "fighting spirit" that can be put to use "in appropriate contexts". The application of the violent behaviour of moran in acceptable activities is found in such contexts as cattle raids, lion hunts, fights with moran from other sections of the Maasai or neighbouring tribes, and in the recurrent fits that are thrown by individual moran. It is also said that moran are sexually violent and women tell many stories of their sexual violence, especially at the time of *eunoto*. But people do not condemn these practices. This is because moranhood is an anti-structural stage of the Maasai life cycle that also marks the formation of an age-set. It is because the characteristic behaviour of moranhood is so different to that of normal social existence that it acts as a powerfully cohesive force. The anti-structural activities of the moran reinforce the sense of communitas of the period and are a vital component in the creation of a sense of sharing between those who are participants.

Spencer (1988: 114) cites an example that shows how important this period of time is in relation to events later in one's life (see Chapter 5, p. 132 for an outline of this case). In this case it is because of the relationship that Naeku had with the moran when she was a girl that, as elders, they were willing to help her. The example suggests that the sense of communitas established during moranhood stays with those who participated for the rest of their lives.

But it is this cohesive experience that also forms the basis of social interaction in later life. It is as a result of having built up strong links with one's fellow age-mates while one was a moran that one can ensure against the vagaries of a pastoral existence. The successful maintenance of Maasai society is based on an open and flexible framework within which the pastoral endeavour can be pursued. Moranhood indoctrinates young men into an ethic of sharing with others that is fundamental to this process. Conversely, those behavioural patterns that are tolerated amongst moran are counter productive to this sense of sharing and consensus once men become herd owners. This is because to be a successful pastoralist requires that one keeps one's options open. To close off possibilities has negative implications for one's long-term success in the enterprise (cf. Myers 1986:

162). To respond emotionally to events in a way that is likely to lead to discord or to be disruptive is therefore problematic. It is only by keeping a cool and calm approach to events that one can hope to have an impact on these events and so exert influence.

It is now time to consider the ways in which individuals are socialised into the behavioural patterns that are perceived by the society as appropriate and which allow them as adults to use influence effectively.

6.2 Socialisation and Status

I suggested in Chapter 3 that acquiring the status of a life cycle stage is something that individuals work at. On only one occasion is there an automatic transfer from one stage to the next and this occurs at circumcision. For the rest of the time, it is a combination of the individual adopting the appropriate attributes of a life cycle stage, together with those observing the changes recognising and acknowledging them. While the movement of an individual through the series of life cycle stages is dependent upon ageing and is unilineal, at the times when a transfer of status is likely, the interactive process of action and reaction between the individual and the community contributes to the process. This means that children not only learn to be responsive to the reactions of others but also to experiment with new patterns of behaviour and attire.

As a child, the better one is able to imitate the role of a new status, the more likely it is that public opinion will promote one to that new status. The way others label the person marks the recognition of this change. People reinforce the culturally favoured actions of the child by labelling their appearances and actions appropriately, and this in turn establishes a predilection on the part of the child to follow a particular behavioural pathway. This means that in labelling people, whether they be children or adults, apparent or anticipated status can play as important a part in how people relate to each other as can actual status. It is this ambiguity that provides one of the key ways in which people are able to manipulate relationships. For the moment though attention will focus on the socialisation of children into the roles that are expected of them.

Socialisation is both a passive and an active process. All children absorb what goes on around them, interpret this information and then experiment in the application of what they have learned in their dealings

with others. Experimentation requires the active involvement of children in the social life of the society. But children can also be the passive recipients of cultural information as the following example shows:

EPISODE 11.

> *Ng'oto* Moyioi's newly-born baby boy was less than a week old when I went to see her. When I arrived she was anointing him with *eilata* (in this case rendered sheep's fat). She did this by holding him on the palm of her left hand while she smeared *eilata* on him with her right hand. When she had completely coated the baby she held him upright with her hands supporting him under his armpits, and her fingers at the back of his neck to support his head. She then gently threw him up and down, simulating the movement of *ilmurran* dancing. While she did this she crooned to him and repeatedly addressed him as '*Lo murrani*!'. This went on for several minutes.

This Episode is important for several reasons. It shows the passive way in which children may be indoctrinated with the appropriate behaviour that will be expected of them in later life, and shows that this process starts from the time of birth. It also illustrates that women are crucial to this process. From a very early age sons are introduced to their future role as moran and it is the women who actively glorify the state of moranhood to their sons. Women therefore play an important role in creating the habitus for their sons that will carry them into the age-set system.

Movement towards moranhood is of major significance in the process of male socialisation and adults constantly refer to, and anticipate it:

EPISODE 12.

> One day when I was out with the cows a boy passed us wearing red ochre and donning some of the elements of attire that are characteristic of moran. As the circumcision period had only recently opened for the new age-group I asked Kapen whether this boy was circumcised before I addressed him. Kapen said that he was not yet circumcised and so I addressed the boy saying: '*Eero*!' ('O youth!') which boys often use when out herding. After he had gone Kapen asked me why I had addressed him in this way when I should have addressed him as '*Lo murrani*!'. When I said that I had done this because he was not yet circumcised Kapen said that that did not matter because he was preparing to become *olmurrani*.

Boys often carry spears, grow their hair and ochre it, which is all behaviour that precedes *olamal loo layiok* (lit. 'the deputation of the boys') as preparation for the opening of a new circumcision period. These activities form part of the build up to *ilamala* seeking a new circumcision period and the approval for it from the elders. In the Episode the boy's attire and demeanour suggest his active movement towards moranhood. Consequently Kapen was upset that I did not acknowledge this in the way I addressed him.

This shows how action and reaction help to create the appropriate mood for bringing about a change in attitude towards a new circumcision period. Obviously the more often that boys don the physical attributes of moranhood, and people address them as if they were moran, the closer becomes the inevitability of moranhood itself. With the ever increasing signs of moran-like behaviour from the boys the community anticipates the introduction of a new age-group. Once the public feels there is a sense of inevitability about the impending event then a consensus of opinion can be achieved on the issue. A new circumcision period can be opened and a new group of moran initiated. But it is the boys through their behaviour that instigate this process.

People often address boys as '*Lo murrani*!'. This is especially the case when women see boys doing something that is more appropriately the behaviour associated with moran, and when they show excellence at it. For instance, when a boy sings an especially clever song his mother may congratulate him with the statement *'Olmurrani lai, eisidai ele*', i.e. 'My moran, that [song] is good'.[2] But this process works both ways because not only are boys called '*Lo murrani*!' for appropriate behaviour but appropriate behaviour can also be anticipated or expected in return for the use of this particular form of address. Thus Austin (1903: 89) talks of mothers calling their young sons "*Elmoran*" because they had to "be brave and not mind pain" while jiggers were being cauterised in their feet. Mothers, in particular, deploy this technique in order to evoke particular types of desired behaviour from their sons. For example, it is a common

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2. The evidence presented here suggests that Mol's (n.d.: 168) observation that '*Olmurrani lai*' "is used in a patronising manner to little boys" is incorrect. I found no evidence of *IlOitai* using sarcasm or patronising forms of speech. In my experience, calling a male '*Olmurrani*!' was always done in a complimentary way (cf. Chapter 7).

ploy for mothers to call their sons *olmurrani* when they wish them to do things that they may not otherwise want to do.

There is an interesting contrast between the social development of young girls and young boys. Young girls spend much of their time imitating the activities of adult women, such as carrying pieces of wood as children on their backs, cleaning calabashes, and 'cooking'. Once they are older they no longer play at these activities. Instead they perform them under the guidance of their mothers as if they were adult females. By the time a girl approaches circumcision she undertakes all the tasks of an adult woman, the only difference being that she is not responsible for the overall management of household affairs. On the other hand, young boys have a limited set of behavioural signs as cues for adult male behaviour. Adult male life largely lacks task-oriented activities that boys can readily imitate (although see Episode 13, p. 170). On the other hand, moranhood displays a wide variety of distinctive attributes that can be imitated. The play of boys therefore tends to move from activities framed on principles of adult male concerns, such as the building of *inkang'itie* and the corralling of cattle using sticks and stones, when they are very young, to the imitation of the physical attributes of moranhood once they are old enough to go herding alone. Thus while girls can develop adult female roles through mimesis and follow a simple behavioural progression through the life cycle, the situation is more complex for boys. The disjunction between the behaviour of elders and moran means that in the process of status transformation from childhood to maturity other factors play a part as motivating forces of change.

This is where women are crucial. A boy's early socialisation is largely in the hands of his mother and mothers spend a lot of time and effort in creating an atmosphere that is conducive for a boy to want to become *olmurrani*. Llewelyn-Davies (1978: 214-215) suggests that the concern of women with their sons becoming moran is because a woman is dependent upon her adult sons for her security in old age. One could also say that it is because of the status that a woman acquires when she has a son who is *olmurrani*, and that it is through her sons that a woman plays a significant role in the formation of a new age-set and in age-set rituals (cf. Llewelyn-Davies 1981). However this is a narrow view of a state of being that all Maasai perceive as an especially attractive and evocative period of one's life.

The time when males were moran and the girls joined them in the manyata is glorified in the songs sung, and the stories told, by both men and women into their old age. Thus as adults, both men and women are able to refer to the time in a way that encourages those who have not yet experienced it to want to be a part of it. For example, Llewelyn-Davies (1981: 333) says that "elders look back upon [moranhood] with pride and nostalgia" and Spencer (1988: 68) says that "moran occupy a cherished position" in society. He adds:

> "Everyone in different ways is enchanted by the ideal of moranhood as a climax of male virility. Boys look forward to this period eagerly; elders hark back to it; girls look to moran for lovers; young wives are suspected; mothers of moran dote on their sons' position; and the moran themselves bask in this limelight." (Spencer 1988: 68)

Because the whole society glorifies moranhood it is not surprising that the motivation exists for boys to want to be a part of this experience.

Once a boy has become a moran and entered an age-group then he no longer requires further pushing through the system because the movement will come from the mothers of the next generation of boys. Thus the next generation seeking to become *ilmurran* underpins the further advancement of a male and his set. The conscious effort for advancement is only applicable in the relationship between mothers and uncircumcised sons, a factor that is constant regardless of a son's birth order or a mother's position relative to other wives. This means that once a male enters an age-set no conscious effort is required to move into a new status because further advancement is underpinned by the generation below who seek to become *ilmurran* and so become members of an age-set.

While the social emphasis is on making moran out of boys, it ought not to be forgotten that adults encourage both boys and girls to adopt the attributes that go with a new life cycle stage. The older women also encourage the girls in their adoption of the activities they will undertake as adult, married women and guide them as they learn how to do these tasks.

The effect of a continual process of action and reaction between the child and the community reinforces appropriate behaviour and discourages inappropriate behaviour. While this is an important part of the adoption of expected changes in status it is also applicable to other contexts. Once a young child (*enkerai*) starts to look and behave more like a boy (*olayioni*) or a girl (*entito*) then the community will recognise this in the way that they

talk about the individual and in the behaviour that is expected and anticipated of the child. Over time each child therefore builds up a mental map of what society expects of them and learns to act accordingly. The life cycle changes that children go through provide an important means by which they learn these lessons. This is because they involve the child in working at the adoption of appropriate behaviour, even though from a very early age they passively receive some of this information. Thus, in the same way that *ilamala* act collectively to persuade the wider community of the need for change, so too do children act individually to persuade others of the need for a change in a status. Socialisation is therefore a process not only of adopting appropriate behavioural patterns, but also of convincing others that one is serious in what one does. Once a child is able to do the latter then, while the timing is open to negotiation, the process of change becomes inevitable. The recognition of status changes, and the need to work at them, is therefore a valuable lesson of childhood and these practices help to prepare children for the social interactions that will involve them as adults.

In this section I have discussed how the community encourages children to adopt particular patterns of behaviour through a process of reinforcing appropriate actions. This not only applies to the progression of children through the life cycle but also pertains to patterns of behaviour that are regarded as either socially acceptable or unacceptable. In the previous section of this chapter I discussed responses to negative emotions and pointed out that a great deal of effort is put into suppressing the reactions of children when they do such things as cry, throw tantrums or act aggressively towards others. Socialisation is therefore a process of both teaching children behavioural patterns that are conducive to the creation and maintenance of social links with others, and also of encouraging children to adopt and cultivate the attributes that pertain to the various life cycle stages through which they must pass in their progress towards responsible adulthood. But this is only one side of a child's development. Just as important is the acquisition of the appropriate ways in which to communicate and interact with others. This is both a matter of learning the appropriate techniques by which to influence others and of developing a sense of the appropriate strategy to use in order to be successful in the use of one's influence. In the next section of this chapter I discuss how children gain this competence.

6.3 Gaining Political Competence

Gaining political competence involves two factors. First it requires that the individual be able to establish and build up relationships with others and second it requires that one be capable of persuading others to one's point of view. The first aspect of political competence relies on individuals learning how they can best relate to others. The choices are many and one must learn which is the most appropriate way to establish a link for one's own purposes. The second aspect of political competence relates to the ways in which individuals choose to frame their relationships and maintain their continuity. Both aspects involve the manipulation and negotiation of meaning.

Children who learn the appropriate ways in which to manage meaning are those who are most likely to be successful as adults in controlling the events in their lives. In this section of the chapter I consider the development of these techniques.

To be able to exert influence a person has to be able to manipulate meaning. This means that a person who is politically competent is one who is adept at presenting ideas. Children learn from an early age to imitate adults and one way in which they do this is to mimic the way that adults talk:

EPISODE 13.

> *Papa* had been away for several weeks 'looking for animals'. On his return Lekishon pretended to be his father and gave me a graphic description of his father's trip by 'telling (me) the news' (*ainosa ilomon*). Lekishon told the story of his father's exploits and imitated the style of 'telling the news' to the degree of spitting, coughing and grunting for emphasis at the appropriate moments of the discourse, just as his father would have done. The send up was a masterpiece and I was in a helpless state of laughter. Lekishon was about twelve years old and could not resist smiling at my response. At the end of the telling of the news Lekishon collected his sticks, grunted, spat and left the house as if he was a dignified elder.

Telling the news is an essential element of Maasai discourse. It is the first thing that visitors do when they arrive at *enkang'*. A visitor is usually invited into the house of a family they know and the news is exchanged between the visitor and the person they are visiting. This

follows a ritualised pattern of speech that is interspersed with encouraging noises from the listener and with such statements as 'that's how things are' from the teller. As a result, telling the news has a distinctive rhythm to it that is different to normal speech. During the telling of the news people talk about the welfare of their families, the health of their animals and the current climatic conditions in the area from which they come. They may also use it as a means by which to introduce a request to the person whom they are visiting. This could take the form, for instance, of a statement like: one of my children is sick and I do not have the money to take them to the dispensary. In this way the person telling the news has introduced to the listener the fact that there is a problem without directly asking for assistance. Thus telling the news can act like an overture to matters that one wishes to pursue later.

Just as greeting people is an incredibly important part of social interaction, so to is telling the news. It provides a ritualised context in which people can inform others of the events in their lives and enables people to get news about other areas of Maasailand. When one meets a fellow Maasai, after greeting them, and if they have been away or one has not seen them for some time, then the next step is to tell the news. All Maasai can tell the news and one person described 'being Maasai' to me as being someone who was able to tell the news. Competence in this conversational form is therefore very important, both for boys and girls, as preparation for adult life.

Episode 13 showed that at 12 years of age Lekishon had not only mastered the technique of telling the news but was also capable of imitating the way in which his father would do it. But telling the news is only one way in which children learn to adopt adult-like behaviour:

EPISODE 14.

> After a great deal of trouble I was allowed to go out with the cows. This meant that I usually went with the second eldest son of the family who was not yet circumcised but who was about to enter *IlKeekonkop* circumcision group. Shortly after I started going out with him he began addressing me thus:

Lekishon (address)	self (response)
'*O le le*!'	'*O le le*!'
'*Apaayia*!'	'*Apaayia*!'
'*Apaayia*!'	'*Apaayia*!'
'*Apaayia*!'	'*Apaayia*!'
'*Supa*!'	'*Ipa*!'

This is a form of address often used amongst young men (after *eunoto*) who cattle trade as a group, although any two men who are good friends can more generally use it.

Lekishon continued to address me in this way until I became the proud owner of two heifers when he, his younger brother and also his sister's son, all of whom I went herding with, started to address me as:

Lekishon (address)	self (response)
'*Entawuo*!'	'*Entawuo*!'
'*Supa*!'	'*Ipa*!'

This is a form of address used between two stock associates. *Entawuo* means heifer and under normal circumstances would suggest that a heifer had been given to one of the individuals involved in the verbal exchange.

Boys and girls often play with the ways in which they address people. This Episode shows how they do this. Usually the boys would address me as either '*Na siankiki*!' ('O married woman!') or by using my personal name. But once our relationship could be interpreted in a more individualistic manner, because I joined them when they went herding, one boy chose to use the form of greeting used between young men instead. Then when I owned cattle the boys perceived my status differently again and used the term of address, '*Entawuo*!'.

When I involved myself in the same activities as boys who were approaching circumcision, then Lekishon chose to label me as if I were a potential age-mate. He played with the use of the term of address and treated me as though I were following the same social path as himself (being circumcised, becoming *olmurrani*, developing close friendships and then of trading in cattle before establishing a family). This process moved one step further once I owned animals: I now held the potential to be a stock partner and so Lekishon addressed me as such.

It is important to note that if one can label another individual in a particular way then one can expect certain things in return: for instance, gifts of animals or money. This is because the label can indicate an expected or anticipated behaviour. Talle (1988: 72), for example, suggests

that the transaction of animals may not be as significant as the relationship expressed by the proposed transaction. She goes on to say that the promise is an asset in itself because it helps to build up a network of relationships that provide the best guarantee in times of hardship for people.

The game that Lekishon played in the way he addressed me in Episode 14 is therefore a case of experimenting with a form of association, recognised in a term of address, that Lekishon will be party to in his adult life. By adopting the appropriate term of address Lekishon anticipated a stock associate link between us and so pre-empted the claims of other possible contenders. Proof of this strategy lies in his younger brother and his sister's son following the initiative taken by Lekishon and imitating his use of the term of address. They were both several years younger than Lekishon and looked up to him. They also modelled their behaviour on his and in so doing were learning the importance of the tactical use of labels.

In Chapter 3 I pointed out that even in the case of kinship terms behaviour can play a significant part in whether particular terms are used. The following Episode further illustrates this point:

EPISODE 15.

> *Koko* and I went to the scheme in the morning and as we were walking towards the hill we had a young *IlPurko* man (of *IRaantai* age-group) pass us. After greetings had been exchanged and *Koko* had asked him where he was from he asked *Koko* who I was (I had been excluded from the conversation up to this point) and referred to me as '*EnkAshumpai*' (a European, or someone who wears European clothing). *Koko* responded to this method of labelling quite scathingly (as if he was blind, deaf and dumb) by retorting that I was '*Entito ai*' ('my [i.e. *Koko*'s] daughter'). He did not know how to respond to this and although he sniggered, he dropped the subject.

Koko often addressed me as her daughter ('*Entito ai*') in private. In this instance, the young man asked *Koko* in public who I was, and she responded in a similar manner. While it was immediately obvious that I could not be *Koko*'s daughter, the labelling of me as such suggested an 'affinity' that the young man could not argue with. Here it was behaviour that evoked the use of the label. *Koko* used a kin term because to her I was like a daughter: I lived with her, collected water and firewood and provided for many of her needs.

Thus learning to use terms of address is not only about placing individuals in a particular position in society but is also about being able to use labels in order to enhance the position of the speaker. The apt use of labels can help create a mood or atmosphere conducive to what the speaker wishes to say next. The skilled use of labels is consequently more than just a process of naming.

One can summarise the use of terms of address in the following way:

- they can acknowledge the real status of a person;
- they can anticipate a future status of an individual without any behavioural or adornment attributes being currently displayed;
- they can acknowledge a behaviour or attire that is appropriate for a particular status which is being exhibited by a person but which is not that expected of the individual for the status they are currently displaying;
- they can be used as a means of evoking a particular type of behaviour; or
- they can be used to articulate political relationships (see Episode 17, p. 175, below).

Children need to learn when they can successfully manipulate the use of a label in order to evoke the idea of something more than just a simple greeting. Greeting someone in a particular way can suggest a whole range of other possibilities or potentialities that are not simply about acknowledging the presence of the other person. Thus it is only through experimentation with these terms that children can come to an understanding of their semantics and so learn how to manipulate their meaning.

In a mood of play children can, by trial and error, experiment with terms of address. But for adults this is less often an option:

EPISODE 16.

One evening the young men (of *IRaantai* age-group) came to our house to drink tea, talk and sing. One of the young men addressed a woman present as '*Enkitok ai*'. The woman was married to someone from *IlKiseeya* (the age-set that had preceded the formation of *IRaantai* age-group). She replied that she was not his wife and he was not to use that form of address when he spoke to her.

Tucker and Ole Mpaayei (1955: 35) have pointed out that "great care must be used in the employment of vocatives, as offence may easily be taken if the socially wrong form is used". However the offence may not come out of wrong use but rather out of an unwillingness on the part of the individual or individuals being addressed to accept the implication of the vocative being used. In this case the young man who addressed the woman as '*Enkitok ai*' was partly joking and partly serious. The implication of the way in which he addressed the woman was that they could be lovers. But the woman rejected this potential meaning and treated the exchange as unambiguous. Her annoyance at the suggestion implied by the young man revealed that she did not want to be his lover. The potential for ambiguity in the use of these terms always leaves the possibility of a person taking offence. But if a child learns the limits of what others consider to be acceptable then these disagreements over meaning are unlikely to cause discord and be problematic.

Use of terms of address by adults constantly shows the ways in which they manipulate them to create meaning. Often their use is predictable and uncontroversial. But as the example above showed this is not always the case. More often people manipulate their meaning in order to create a particular image:

EPISODE 17.

> After milking in the evening *Papa* appeared with another *olmoruo*. They were both drunk and *Papa* entered *Koko*'s house, addressing *Koko* and I as '*Na kera*!' ('O children!'). *Koko* is in her sixties and about the same age as *Papa*, if not slightly older. We had brewed tea and as *Papa* had been away from *enkang'* they stayed for some time. They drank tea with us and told us the news. *Koko* was not drunk and by the end of their stay she was addressing *Papa* as '*Na kerai*!' ('O child!'). By this stage *Papa* had dropped using '*Na kerai*!' when he spoke to *Koko*.

Papa's return with an age-mate after a beer drinking session, and his addressing *Koko* as if she were a child, appeared to show who held authority in the family. *Koko* ignored the connotations of the way in which *Papa* greeted her and acted as if *Papa*'s greeting was not worthy of comment. In her role as mother-in-law, she provided the men with tea and hospitality and exchanged the news with them while her daughter was absent. From these actions it was clear that *Papa* could not ignore her

status in the family and greeting her as 'O Child!' had been inappropriate. By the end of the discussion *Koko* made this quite clear when she in turn addressed *Papa* as 'O Child!'. Consequently, *Koko* was able to end the conversation with her son-in-law on a note of status equivalence that compromised his earlier attempt to exert authority.

This outcome to their conversation would not have been obvious to an observer at the beginning. But because *Koko* was as adept at the 'game' of addressing people as *Papa*, she was able to counterbalance his attempt to undermine her role in the family by addressing him in a similar way. By the end of the conversation it is *Koko* who is in charge because she has shown that she can control the situation. Thus *Papa*'s attempt to gain an advantage over *Koko* in this conversation only led to the undermining of his own position.

These examples have shown that the ways in which people choose to relate to each other, and the way they reflect this in their use of terms of address, is very important. Episodes 13 and 14 illustrated the ways in which children start to build up a set of techniques through which they can relate to others. They become competent at using the rhetorical devices employed by adults and experiment with their use. This is true for both boys and girls and much of the early play with these techniques is between children. But to gain competence requires convincing others of one's point of view and this is not always an easy task. It is when children try these techniques on adults that they begin to learn that technique is not everything:

EPISODE 18.

> Masitoi, a girl of *entito* status, said that she would wake me up early the next morning because we were going to a circumcision at one of the neighbouring *inkang'itie*. When she did not wake me up I asked her what had happened. She said that *Koko* (the grandmother of the family) had asked her where we were going and she had replied that she was taking me to the circumcision because I wanted to take photographs. *Koko* replied that she was not to take me because the people would ask for money if I took photographs and that that was the end of the matter. Masitoi was unable to get *Koko*'s agreement that we could go. When I heard the story I told Masitoi that I had had no intention of taking photographs and that I wished she had not embellished the facts. By this time it was too late to attend the circumcision.

Masitoi was unable to convince her grandmother of the validity of her point of view. She attempted to influence the view of her grandmother but found that her grandmother was able to present a more convincing case than that of her own. While the technique that Masitoi used was appropriate, the strategy was not. The methods people employ to present a case are the techniques of politics and I have argued in this thesis that the Maasai prefer to use influence. On the other hand, strategy is a plan that people have regarding the way they will achieve something. So the strategy may lie, as in the case of Masitoi above, in the way one is going to argue a case. But strategy can also incorporate such considerations as the time and place that one will introduce a subject and in the presence of whom this will be done. All these factors could affect the outcome.

In the previous chapters of this thesis I have presented several cases that illustrate this point. The case of Seiyan (Episode 1, Chapter 3, pp. 70-71) is a simple example of this. The personal problems that beset Seiyan were largely beyond her control. Nor did she have any kin living in the area to whom she could appeal for help. Because there were no kin to whom she could turn she chose instead to leave home. But she did this as a symbolic gesture instead of using it as a way of creating a permanent split in the family. This then left her action open for interpretation by those outside the immediate family. The result was that her husband's age-set took it upon themselves to pursue the matter.

Seiyan's strategy was therefore one of bringing to public attention her plight and then relying on the fairness of her husband's age-set to recognise her problem. While, as I have stated, this did not lead to a change in her circumstances it did mean that in any future case of conflict, public opinion would be more likely to support her, because of the age-set's previous assessment of her situation. Under different circumstances she may have fled to the home of her parents or a lover in order to ameliorate the impact of her husband's behaviour. But in this case she did not. While I discuss strategies in relation to a pastoral mode of livelihood in Chapter 7 it is important to note here that technique and strategy are both aspects of political competence.

Strategy is a matter of choosing what one sees as the most appropriate way of achieving what one desires. Inevitably the process of reaching a decision about strategy is a complex one. It may involve using

influence, power or authority, or a combination of more than one of these. While the culture does not encourage the use of power or authority, both remain available options and, as I pointed out in Chapter 1, the use of these techniques does not occur in a vacuum. Often using influence effectively is only possible because power is also a viable option. But power and authority are not preferred ways of dealing with a situation because their use is potentially disruptive. But no particular technique ensures success. For example, in Episode 17 (p. 175) *Papa* unsuccessfully attempted to use a combination of power and authority. In the same way, in Episode 18 (p. 176), Masitoi unsuccessfully attempted to influence her grandmother. Consequently, one can never predict an outcome. Gaining political competence is a process of learning how best to maximise one's chances of achieving success.

The intricacies of the political process as they are played out in daily social interaction always involve a combination of factors. As an example of this complexity the events that surrounded my attempts to go herding are worthy of consideration:

EPISODE 19.

When I first broached the subject of going out with the cows the initial response was that I would not survive without water for the whole day. I said that I would take a bottle of water with me and *Papa* and the immediate family gave their approval for me to go herding.

On my first morning out herding, Lekishon and I set off with the cows and passed a neighbouring *enkang'* where further cattle joined the herd. Here *Menye* Moyioi stopped Lekishon and asked him who he was herding with. He replied that Kapen, another boy from our *enkang'*, was joining him. *Menye* Moyioi then asked where I was going and Lekishon replied simply: *'Inkishu'* ('Cattle'). *Menye* Moyioi came and stood in front of me and said that I could not go. When I asked why he replied that women do not herd. I replied that I had herded cattle in Australia but he took no notice and stood his ground. In the end I had to return to our *enkang'*.

When I returned home *Koko* explained that my not being allowed to go was because I had been sick in the stomach the previous day and a strong sun would make me ill again. She added that I would be able to go out with the cows later. Her daughter arrived and agreed with this and added that she would come out with me after I had been to Nairobi (where I was shortly to visit).

> Sometime later *Menye* Moyioi's wife came to our *enkang'* to collect me to go and drink beer. This was a conciliatory act and also had an ulterior motive as she wished to ask me to get her various things from Nairobi. Once I was sitting drinking beer she proceeded to tell me that it was '*Eitorrono*' (lit. 'It is bad') to go out with the cattle because of the wild animals in the forest. Her husband arrived while we were drinking and repeated this reasoning. He also reiterated that women should not herd cattle. I countered this by saying that I had seen a woman (*entomononi*) herding cattle at Entasekera. I then further tried to confound his argument by saying that I was not really a woman because I had neither a husband nor children. He ignored my arguments but seemed less emphatic about the matter than he had been earlier in the day. I suspected this was because he had spoken to *Koko* and Maitukaiya in the interim and they had supported me on the matter. They would also have told *Menye* Moyioi that *Papa* had already given his approval for my going out with the cows (*Papa* was away at the time).
>
> By the evening, when the two boys returned from herding the cattle, Lekishon told me that *Menye* Moyioi said it was because of the danger from the wild animals that I could not go herding. But after 'dinner' Lekishon told *Koko*, when he thought that I was not listening, that it was because of the danger of my being ambushed by other Maasai while I was out with the cows and having my money stolen that *Menye* Moyioi had really stopped my going out.

One can see from this sequence of events that *Menye* Moyioi did not want me to go out with the cows. But to maintain control of the situation, over time, he had to change his argument as popular opinion shifted ground. His first defence, that I was a woman, I chose to treat as irrelevant. As other members of the family became involved in the debate over whether I could go out herding *Menye* Moyioi changed his argument in order to remain in command of the situation. This shows that it was the ends, not the means, that concerned *Menye* Moyioi in his strategy to stop me from going out with the cattle.

While *Menye* Moyioi maintained overall control of the situation he clearly wished to achieve this without resorting to the use of power. He could, for instance, have forced the issue by splitting his herd away from that of *Papa*'s, thus putting pressure on the family to support his view. This move would also have automatically involved a wider group of people

in the debate because it would have affected all those families whose animals made up the herding unit. In addition, it held the potential to cause rifts between the families involved as people would have been forced to take sides over the matter. Instead, *Menye* Moyioi chose to deploy an influential method to achieve his ends. He sought to persuade me and others of his point of view by presenting an argument based on contingencies outside his personal control.

The strategy employed by *Menye* Moyioi is partly explicable on the grounds that he did not wish to antagonise me. At this stage in the fieldwork the people were aware that if they needed something and I could oblige then I would help them. This was usually in the form of food, goods or money. *Menye* Moyioi was therefore aware that it was better to keep the channels of communication open between us because I may be useful to him at some future point in time. He therefore chose to deflate my initial reaction of anger and frustration by making the conciliatory gesture of offering me beer, and then by negotiating a temporary peace. In this way he was able both to prevent a rift occurring and to stop the situation from escalating into open confrontation.

Thus, a dispute can draw people into a debate about the dispute itself. People involve themselves in a dialogue with the disputants and with each other over the issues entailed. While this is recognised as being the way in which age-set meetings work, it is important to recognise that this is as relevant a process in normal daily social activity as in the workings of age-sets.

This has two consequences: no one individual has absolute control over a situation and, concomitant to this, one can only successfully achieve one's ambition if one is willing to shift ground. The fact that arguments and counter arguments may contradict each other is unimportant because consistency is not the main aim. The central issue is to convince others that one's own point of view has more value than that put by others so that compulsion is on one's side. Strategy can therefore be as much about one's willingness to change one's point of view as about adopting a particular plan of action. At an individual level, this suggests that dogmatism is not an approach that is likely to achieve success. A dogmatic approach is likely to be counter productive to one's intentions because it negates the possibility for the negotiation of common ground as a result of shifting positions.

The other crucial factor in this process is time. What is most interesting and revealing about Episode 19 is that the responses varied, not only by person, but also over time and as a result of what other people had said. As new arguments or views were presented *Menye* Moyioi shifted his position. He did this because his central concern was to convince others that his point of view held more weight than that put by anybody else. But because there was an ongoing discourse over the matter *Menye* Moyioi had to be willing to change what he said. As new reasons were presented, new answers to these had to be found. This in turn led to even more new propositions and answers as the previous claims and counter-claims were discarded as inappropriate. Time therefore played a crucial role in the perceptions of all those involved in these events. But also over time the continuing aim of all those involved in this Episode was to maintain the discourse, no matter how circumstances might change.

In Chapter 5 I pointed out that one of the reasons for using influence, in a society like the Maasai, is that it allows one to keep one's options open. Its use does not cut off some individuals from others, thus preventing them from being involved in any future negotiations. Using influence is about maintaining an open forum for debate, discussion and decision making. At the level of the individual this is important for one's long-term prospects. If circumstances change then it allows one not only to change one's point of view, but it also means that there is no barrier to telling others that this is the case. Using influence is therefore an instrumental factor in perpetuating involvement: its continuing and continual use means that individuals can always remain part of the process of discussion and debate. The following events illustrate the significance of keeping open the lines of communication:

EPISODE 20. (Continuation of EPISODE 19)

Some time after the events described in Episode 19 I attended *Maendeleo ya Wanawake* (Swahili, lit. 'Progress [hence Movement] of the Women'; a nation-wide organisation for women) at the development project with another woman from our *enkang'*. They had some wool and so I started crocheting hats. There was a demand for them amongst the men and the group could easily sell them to raise funds.

Menye Moyioi found out that I was making hats and came in one evening and told me to give him one. I said that he would have to buy one because it was for

Maendeleo. He again said: 'Give me one'. To this I replied that I would give him one if he would let me go out with the cows. He agreed to this saying that when I gave him the hat, then I could go out with the cows.

He pestered me non-stop after this until I had made the hat for him. When he collected it a couple of weeks later he was obviously pleased with it. I reminded him of our deal and asked when I could go out with the cows. He replied: 'Tomorrow with Lekishon'. I did indeed go out with the cows the following day and from then on had no further problems about joining the boys when they were herding.

Episodes 19 and 20 indicate why it is important to keep lines of communication open. They show that with time new elements may enter into the equation and one may wish to re-negotiate the basis upon which a previous decision was reached. If Episode 19 had ended in total enmity then re-negotiation would not have been an option.

Episode 20 illustrates how, over time, new elements can enter into a relationship. In this case *Menye* Moyioi discovered that I could make him an object that he valued, a hat. As a result, we were able to negotiate a new agreement whereby I could go out with the cows when I had made him a hat. But this Episode also illustrates how there can be a shift in the type of political technique used through time. At the beginning of Episode 19 *Menye* Moyioi attempted to use authority in order to prevent me from going out with the cows. When other people became involved in the debate influence was brought to bear. Finally, with the presence of a new factor, it was power that underlay the negotiations. *Menye* Moyioi had to offer me an equally attractive incentive in order to get that which he coveted. In the end we negotiated an agreement that was mutually beneficial without resorting to the use of power.

One can summarise the process by which individuals gain and use political competence as follows. Political competence is a matter of combining technique with strategy in a way that is likely to provide successful results. For example, when A seeks something from B, one of two responses is possible: either B can agree to oblige A; or B can choose to reject the request made by A. If the latter occurs between A and B this does not exclude the possibility of future approaches by either A or B, using the same or different strategies. However if such overtures are continually rejected by B then it is possible that a time will come when A

may tire of even trying to form a link with B. But this change in attitude on the part of A would partly depend on how convincing B's justification was for not being able to oblige A. Each individual, therefore, must play a careful balancing act, avoiding the alienation of others while keeping options open and, in terms of long-term social interaction, maintaining lines of communication. On the other hand, if B agrees to oblige A then a relationship of indebtedness is established. I discuss relationships and indebtedness in Chapter 7.

Thus it is the ability of the individual that is of utmost importance in this process. To speak of some people as being subordinate to others in Maasai society is to misunderstand the relationship between ideology and practice. The ways in which people achieve what they want do not vary according to their position or status in society: the ambitions of different groups of people vary, but the means by which to fulfil these ambitions do not.[3] By gaining political competence children learn how to become successful negotiators when they are adults. This means that as adults they will be more likely to be able to influence the course of events in their lives. Being a successful negotiator is dependent upon the ability of the individual to convince others of the validity of a particular point of view. I discuss how people achieve this in the next section of the chapter.

6.4 Personal Competence and the Negotiation of Meaning

The success or otherwise of an individual in maintaining the potential of a relationship, the ability to avoid a rebuff, and hence avoid the breaking off of communication, involves a process of negotiation of meaning. One must, for instance, be able to say no without creating the impression that one has rejected the premise upon which a request has been made. Putting one's case in a way that convinces others of the validity of that point of view is therefore all-important.

I have already given several examples of this. A typical case would be Episode 6 (Chapter 5, pp. 122-123) where Maitukaiya convinced her

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3. The term ambition has been used because men and women have different life courses that are related to the ideology of Maasai life. In political terms these ambitions could be seen as objectives or desired outcomes. It should also be noted that whilst ambitions may be gender and age specific, for both women and men social reproduction is still the essential basis of social existence.

son-in-law that, while the family accepted their indebtedness to him, they were not able to give him an animal. She did not refuse his request but rather related it to the demands currently made on the family's herds. Either men or women can use this tactic, which is one of delay. Episodes 1 and 3 (Chapter 3, pp. 70-71 and 72-73 respectively) show how individuals may be able to safe-guard their own positions by presenting their cases in a way that overrides the opinion of the majority. These cases show that rhetorical ability may play a crucial role in the decision of others regarding whether they accept one's point of view. Rhetorical skill is therefore relevant to personal political competence. This applies both in the domain of formalised debate at *inkiguenat* and in the informal setting of day-to-day discourse.

Firth (1975: 41) defines rhetoric as "the art of using language so as to persuade or influence others" and this is also the definition adopted by Paine (1981a; 1981c).[4] In fact, viewing "the art of using language ... to persuade ... others" as rhetoric fits very well with the role that discourse plays in *IlOitai* society. Because rhetoric is about such things as "'context', 'strategy', 'performance' and 'persuasion'" then it is also true to say that "the words of rhetoric ... are *moulden*" (original emphasis) (Paine 1981a: 2). That is, the use of rhetoric is not a static, formalised way of communicating information (cf. Bloch 1975a). Episode 19 (pp. 178-179) illustrates this moulden nature of rhetoric.

Bailey (1981: 26) describes a rhetorical discourse in the following way:

> "If one steps back from the single exhortation and looks instead at a succession of such exhortations - a hearing - then rhetoric is revealed as a form of argumentation, a way of testing ideas and evidence, and therefore, like the syllogistic mode of reasoning, a way of reaching a decision."

One can see that in Episodes 19 and 20 (pp. 178-179 and 181-182 respectively) this is exactly the method employed by *Menye* Moyioi. It is also the way in which those present at *inkiguenat* reach a consensus of opinion.

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4. This is not the only way of defining rhetoric (cf. Bloch 1975a and Parkin 1975) but it has become generally accepted in the anthropological literature. For a discussion of the different ways of defining rhetoric see Paine (1981a).

The idea that rhetoric is moulden also implies that people do not accept the idea that a discourse consists of immutable facts. The examples given in relation to discussions during the course of rituals (Chapter 5, pp. 147-151) indicate that there can be disagreement about how something was done in the past. When this occurs the discussion revolves around what is the best alternative among the ways in which an act is thought to have been performed, rather than what is 'correct'. Each presentation is therefore a gloss of selected memories. The practices, at any event, as Episodes 19 and 20 showed, are a product of a continuing flow of interpretations.

If one accepts that rhetoric presents a moulden image of a matter then one can see that using rhetoric enables one to change one's view, as and when one desires, and according to changes in the prevailing circumstances:

EPISODE 21.

> One of *Papa*'s age-mates (*IlTerito*), *Ole* Lekoiyan, came to stay with us for the night and saw me cooking *ughali* for the family. He proceeded to tell us all in a very loud voice that he never ate *oloshoro* or *ughali* because this was the food of *ilcekuti* (herders and therefore, by implication, uncircumcised boys). He added that he only took milk, tea and beer. As a consequence our family only offered him milk that night which he drank. However, I found out later that he had been known to eat *ughali* when he had stayed with other families in our *enkang'* and when that was all that he had been offered.

While *Ole* Lekoiyan emphatically proclaimed that he stood by one set of dietary principles when he stayed in our house, given different circumstances, these principles were waived. His little speech in my presence was as much a statement about how 'Maasai' he was, as about his actual eating habits. The fact that he did not always observe them was irrelevant because by showing that he knew how to express this sense of commitment to pastoral ideals he was achieving the desired end: the expression of a view of 'reality' that conformed to an ideal view of 'Maasainess'. This was an ideological view rather than a practical one. The situation was therefore not one of acknowledgement of a practised behavioural pattern, but rather one of what Goffman (1959: 203) has called "impression management" (and cf. Berreman 1962).

Goffman has pointed out that there are two aspects to the way in which one communicates information. These are "the expression" that the individual "gives" and "the expression" that the individual "gives off" (Goffman 1959: 14). The first consists of the verbal signs that convey information and can be readily understood. But the latter, Goffman (1959: 14) says "involves a wide range of action that others can treat as symptomatic of the actor, the expectation being that the action was performed for reasons other than the information conveyed in this way".

In Episode 21 one can see that our family took *Ole* Lekoiyan's statements about his eating habits at face value. But when he stayed with other families this was not always the case: some 'read' his actions as a case of impression management and ignored the verbal cues conveyed to them. *Ole* Lekoiyan attempted to pre-empt a set of possible assumptions about himself by making a rhetorical statement. But whether people accepted this statement or not depended on a number of other factors, not least of which was the reaction of those who were listening to him. The fact that sometimes he succeeded in having his point of view accepted, and that on other occasions he did not, shows how fluid the whole process of negotiation of meaning can be.

Strategy in the process of negotiation of meaning therefore relates to both the rhetorical abilities of the speaker and the reactions of those who receive the message. The process is an interactive one and the speaker is always limited by the response of those who receive the message. This means that in order to succeed in one's aims one must be flexible. But it also suggests that in successfully negotiating meaning the individual must be able to perceive the potentialities of a situation. Those who perceive the potential of a situation are the ones who are most likely to succeed where others may fail.

This is particularly important if one is to understand the use the Maasai make of rhetorical phrases in their dealings with outsiders. One of the common expressions heard about the Maasai is that "men care about cattle while women care about children" (Llewelyn-Davies 1978: 208). This statement underlies the reasoning behind Llewelyn-Davies' (1978, 1981) and Spencer's (1988) claims that Maasai women are subordinate to men. It suggests that women are downtrodden and that men are powerful. Men own the livestock and they are therefore in control of the most important resource in Maasai society while women are simply child bearers.

Llewelyn-Davies (1978: 213-214) interviewed a married woman who supported this view. She said that women have no control, are unable to dispose of anything, and cannot make decisions. But part of being able to use rhetoric effectively is about being able to convince others of one's needs. In dealing with an outsider the rhetorical device of claiming men own cattle and women only produce children may be an appropriate way in which one can support one's case. For example, any Maasai woman, if she thinks that she can gain by it, will willingly pronounce herself as downtrodden to the listener and this was a ploy that women often used to get things from me early on in the fieldwork. But once my understanding of the system suggested that women were not completely powerless they stopped using this tactic. Instead they adopted other ploys, such as telling me of the unexpected arrival of guests or of a sick child, in order to elicit whatever favour they sought.

Ideological views are therefore just as liable to be used as a rhetorical means by which to gain a desired end as is any other sort of argument. The stereotyped images of the Maasai that are fed back to the outsider by the Maasai should therefore be recognised as a device and should not be treated as representing a truth. Using the technique of exploiting stereotypes is in itself a 'political act' because, in the example given above, the women choose to use the received image of themselves as a means by which to achieve desired ends. Once the listener recognises that this is a case of impression management then it is no longer effective as a technique with which to persuade others. Impression management, by using ideological stereotypes, is therefore an accepted part of the rhetoric that goes to make up the Maasai political repertoire. It can be, and is, used in order to persuade or influence others into accepting one's point of view.[5]

The significance of impression management as an element of one's personal political competence cannot be underestimated. The exploits of *Ole* Sipei, who I have already referred to in Episodes 1 and 3 (Chapter 3, pp. 70-71 and 72-73 respectively), are particularly relevant here. *Ole* Sipei sold all his animals to buy alcohol and each time an age-mate gave him more animals, so that his family had food, he would sell them. While there

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[5]. It is obvious that the use of ideological stereotypes is most likely to prove successful when dealing with non-Maasai. Hence the prevalence of these statements in anthropological texts. The reaction of fellow Maasai to the use of ideological stereotypes varies according to context.

was some resentment amongst those who lived in the same *enkang'* as him and who were his age-mates there was always someone else who would be willing to bail him out of his troubles. He was a particularly good raconteur, spoke well at meetings and was renown for his singing. He involved himself in all the ceremonial and ritual events in the area. He was very popular with the women and had several lovers. As a member of *IlDeregaiyani* age-set he also involved himself in the arrangements being made for the opening of the new circumcision period for the boys. But then the people discovered that *Ole* Sipei had not been circumcised as a young man:

EPISODE 22. (From various second-hand sources)[6]

It was discovered that *Ole* Sipei, who was a father of three and whose eldest daughter was about to be married, was not circumcised. While this was a surprise to everybody it was not a complete impossibility because he had left *IlOitai* and lived in Samburu as a young man. The initial reaction of his age-set (*IlDeregaiyani*) was to demote him to a lower age-set. In the end the set decided to circumcise him rather than demote him. He was taken out into the bush and the women stood around him and watched while the circumcision took place. While he was being operated on the women castigated him with comments like: 'You are only a boy' and 'How can you be the father of our children?'. There was no brewing of beer or slaughtering of animals to celebrate the event.

By the time I returned to the field (two weeks later) the women were treating the whole event as a joke and the men were acting as though it had never happened. *Ole* Sipei remained a member of *IlDeregaiyani* and continued to attend the meetings and ceremonies of his age-mates. None of his current lovers rejected him and he continued to visit them late at night in the surrounding *inkang'itie*.

Although the immediate reaction of the age-set was to demote *Ole* Sipei they did not do this. Because *Ole* Sipei was already part of the group, and acted as a member of it, to demote him would have reflected upon the age-set as much as upon the man himself. It would have

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[6]. Unfortunately I was out of the field when the event described in this Episode occurred but I have several second-hand accounts of it. The description lacks the detail that I would normally have from fieldnotes but the basic elements are sufficient to provide a valuable insight into the aspects of *IlOitai* social practice that I discuss here.

suggested that the age-set was unable to handle the matter as an internal affair, when in every other way *Ole* Sipei's behaviour placed him in the age-set.

In the event, the age-set decided to circumcise *Ole* Sipei so that he physically conformed with his age-mates and then to ignore that there had ever been a discrepancy between the two. But part of the tolerance towards *Ole* Sipei, both over the circumcision and his lack of responsibility as a pastoralist, was because of his rhetorical ability. He loved to be involved in conversations and would spend endless hours with anybody willing to join him in a discussion. The appeal he held for his lovers was also based on this ability. He would often sit and sing songs in the houses of his lovers and he also made people laugh. He was a truly great entertainer. He also managed to manoeuvre situations to his own advantage. Despite having sold all his animals, he had managed to arrange the marriage of two of his daughters to wealthy families who provided him with animals for the needs of his family. Preceding the events described in Episode 3 (Chapter 3, pp. 72-73) *Ole* Sipei had moved his family to *enkang'* of his eldest daughter's future husband in order to gain access to cattle. Thus while *Ole* Sipei was not a successful pastoralist, neither was he a social outcast. This suggests that while the links that men create and maintain with others, through transactions in animals, are important and form the basis of a pastoral existence, there are some individuals who survive in the system because they exhibit other talents that the society views positively. In such cases it is the ability of the individual as a speaker that the community often values (cf. Turton 1975: 179).

This returns the discussion to where the chapter began. Those who isolate themselves from their fellow Maasai, by living apart, herding alone or by consistently expressing their anger, are indulging in practices that act to alienate them from their fellow Maasai. This process of alienation denies the basis upon which all social interaction takes place. Spencer (1988: 4), in talking about ritual amongst *IlMatapato*, has suggested that:

> "Gossip and discussion are as much a part of the ritual process among the Maasai as the nodal events. ... Gossip revealed a perspective on these events that was at least meaningful to the tellers, and formed the basis for further discussion and further examples. ... They are the type of precedent cited in debate and this gives them a dynamic role within the system. For the Matapato they *are* the system." (original emphasis)

I suggest here that "gossip and discussion" are as relevant to daily social practice as they are to ritual. This is because they involve individuals in a process of interaction that forms the basis for all decision-making. Because there is an emphasis on consensus and agreement amongst the Maasai the involvement of all those connected with a matter is a necessary precursor for the system to work. After all, a consensus is only meaningful when it reflects public opinion.

But this also means that for individuals to have an impact upon public opinion requires that they show competence in the strategies and techniques that go to make up Maasai political style. The ability to cajole, plead, persuade and argue, as part of the manipulation of meaning, and the ability to incorporate the arguments and counter arguments of others into a strategy, are both aspects of political competence found amongst the Maasai. I have suggested that the use of the various techniques and strategies is not limited to specific members of the society. Ambitions may vary, but methods for achieving ambitions do not. In the next chapter I consider the interconnection between ambitions and the demands of a pastoral mode of livelihood.

CHAPTER SEVEN
PASTORAL STRATEGIES

I have argued in this thesis that both women and men can be politically competent. While the range of resources that men and women have access to is different the methods by which men and women can achieve desired ends is not. Political success therefore depends upon the personality of the individual, rather than on any pre-ordained position that one holds within the society.

I have also suggested that pastoral success is not a prerequisite for acceptance in Maasai society. Society does not automatically ostracise those individuals who are unable to maintain their herds. While they may become a burden on others because of the demands that they continually make, this does not lead to their exclusion from the social process. This is because rhetorical ability is part of political competence. Thus one can be an unsuccessful pastoralist, as in the case of *Ole* Sipei (Chapter 6 pp. 188-189), but still be tolerated as a member of society.

But to talk of political competence, without relating it to the pastoral way of life of the Maasai, would be to treat politics in isolation from the reality of social existence. In this chapter I investigate the way in which the political process interrelates with a pastoral mode of livelihood. I argue that because the attention of adult males and females focuses on different matters, the ambitions of the two groups are also different. But, while the ambitions of women and men are different the two are interdependent in the successful pursuit of a pastoral way of life.

7.1 The Potential Network of Associates

One of the key elements of Maasai social existence is the creation and maintenance of a wide range of relationships that spread across Maasailand. Through the life cycle system it is possible for all Maasai to greet each other, thus breaking down the barriers between strangers. This generates the possibility for the incorporation of others into one's social network. The problems that arise when a person does not don the adornments and attire of the appropriate Maasai life cycle stage are an important illustration of the power of life cycle stage labelling. When someone dresses in clothes other than

those worn by the Maasai then the people find that they cannot greet them in the usual way. They then have to pick upon other characteristics in order to address the person. For example, people usually call any person wearing European clothing either *OlAshumpai* (an individual wearing European clothing; pl. *IlAshumpa*), if male, or *EnkAshumpai* (pl. *InkAshumpa*), if female. People only use these terms of address for strangers and when they are ignorant of the person's background. Their use therefore reinforces distinctions and differences, rather than acting to break down social barriers.

The whole process by which one can greet, and hence relate to a fellow Maasai enables the creation, achievement and maintenance of legitimate connections that in turn provide the means for social interaction.

It is interesting to draw here upon Geertz's (1975: 364) idea, taken from Schutz (1971), of "predecessors, contemporaries, consociates and successors". Geertz describes the distinctions between the four groups on the basis of differences in sharing. Consociates, for instance, are "individuals who actually meet, persons who encounter one another somewhere in the course of daily life" (Geertz 1975: 365). Contemparies are those who live at the same time but not in the same place. They therefore share "a community of time but not of space" (Geertz 1975: 365). Predecessors and successors are individuals who do not share a "community of time" and so "cannot interact" with each other (Geertz 1975: 366). For the Maasai, one can see that contemporaneity is all important. There is little genealogical depth in the kinship system and the use of teknonyms is always based on living kin. This is also largely true in the use of patronyms.

But physical presence, or at least accessibility, is also important. The Maasai say that when people go away (out of Maasailand) their absence is like death (and cf. Tignor 1972 regarding children attending school). To be absent is like not existing and people who go away to work in the cities, without regular return visits, are treated as if they no longer exist. They fade from the social discourse and from people's memories. This is not surprising when one realises that total physical separation from the community removes one from the daily to and fro of "gossip and discussion" that is so important a part of Maasai existence.[1]

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[1]. One way of counteracting the impact of one's absence is to maintain a herd in the care of relatives. The constant need to manage the herd becomes in itself a reminder of the person and therefore ensures that one is remembered.

The importance of being present and part of the system is clear because it is only in this way, through face-to-face interaction, that it is possible to utilise the network of relationships that one has developed and is part of. One might therefore conclude that a certain degree of anonymity exists between individuals, like the notion of "quasi strangers, quasi friends" that Geertz (1975: 399) has described for the Balinese. But this is not the case. A better way to describe the Maasai system is to see it as a tableau into which individuals can place themselves and re-position or re-locate themselves through time depending upon the prevailing conditions with which they are faced. The key is flexibility and this can only be maintained if the contacts are neither too remote nor too close. They must lie somewhere in between so that it is neither an affront to activate a link which to the other person seems remote, nor an act of insignificance to activate a link which is close. What the system provides is a means by which this can be done as long as the individual is competent to do so.

Thus a balance exists in *IlOitai* between closeness and remoteness in relational links with others. Inherently close relationships, such as those based on kinship, tend to be down-played to reduce the potential for irreparable rifts to occur; and remoteness is reduced through a comprehensive system of linkages that reduces the element of unfamiliarity between any two individuals to a level where immediate recognition is possible. Because recognition is easy this means that there is always the latent opportunity to enter into a discourse and allow it to develop.

Once people create a relationship they then need to maintain it. This is a process that they actively work at, and expend a lot of energy over. For example, men spend long periods of time during the rainy season away from home visiting age-mates, drinking beer and attending ceremonies. Young men, before taking over responsibility for their herds, also travel widely. Women and girls are more confined in their movements but are very well informed about local events. Groups of women and girls sitting *boo* of an afternoon is a common sight and is an occasion when they exchange news and information about people who live in the area. Women also frequently visit other women in their own and neighbouring *inkang'itie*.

The significance of maintaining links with others lies in the nature of the pastoral mode of livelihood. The Maasai say that the future is

unknown.[2] Natural disasters, like drought and famine, are not uncommon. Many people have experienced them in their lifetimes and recall these events in their conversations with others. In addition, there is always the possibility that a disease may decimate one's herds. One should therefore build up strong bonds with one's fellow *IlOitai* so that if disaster strikes one will be able to turn to others for assistance. This is a two way process. If one gives then one can in turn expect to receive, and if one has received then one can expect to be asked to give in return. The continual give and take of the process therefore reinforces the foundation upon which it is based.

The cultural recognition that circumstances can and do change underlies the way in which people behave. Individuals are unlikely to resort to forceful tactics in order to achieve a desired end because of the possible repercussions: use of a political strategy that involves an element of force or coercion is likely to alienate the person practising the strategy. Instead, wherever possible, people try and talk through problems, often involving other people in the process. In this way it is possible to achieve a consensus of opinion on a matter and maintain a sense of balance, as well as sustain open lines of communication. It is this procedure that epitomises the political process in *IlOitai*.

But a discourse is not enough in itself to establish long-standing relationships. Once relationships are created, one way of maintaining them is through the exchange of livestock. I have already suggested that the anticipation of the exchange may be sufficient to maintain a relationship (see Chapter 6) and signify the closeness or friendship of two people. The use of reciprocal forms of address reminds people of their involvement in these relationships and their links with others. I shall discuss these relationships in more detail later in this chapter.

What is important to note here is that the majority of reciprocal forms of address used by *IlOitai* relate to stock, and especially cattle. This is not surprising because cattle are used in all important forms of transaction or exchange within *IlOitai* society. Thus, cattle are not only the cause of this need for extensive links with others but they are also the

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2. This unknown quality of the future is often brought to one's attention when a speculative question about the future is asked. The normal response to such a question is: '*EnkAi nayiolo*' (lit. 'God knows'), meaning that only God could give a satisfactory answer to the question because the answer is unknown by, and out of the hands of, humans.

source of the satisfactory meeting of these needs. They are the pivotal element in the process of *IlOitai* social reproduction: without stock, and in particular cattle, the basis upon which social interaction is founded would be lost. The people are therefore not only dependent upon cattle for their subsistence needs: cattle are also the foundation upon which, and the reason for which, people form social relationships. But this is a male domain of exchange.

Women are not usually able to use cattle as a means by which they can build up relationships. While the technique of using reciprocal forms of address is open to, and used by, women they are unable to involve themselves in exchanges of the nature or importance of those involving cattle. This, it would seem, is the crux of the argument regarding the subordination of women in Maasai society.

Because the society places so much emphasis on cattle it is hard not to see a separation from involvement with cattle as automatically instilling an inferior status on women (cf. Rauber 1987). But to return to Llewelyn-Davies' (1978: 208) statement that "men care about cattle while women care about children", and to accept it without looking more closely at it, is to provide a simplistic view of Maasai society. Throughout this thesis I have argued that women do have some say in matters relating to the animals. This is because they nurse the young stock and are the caretakers of their sons' herds. Thus the labour of women makes a valuable contribution to the management of stock. This provides them with the means to influence the way in which their husbands dispose of at least some of the animals in the family's herd. While I accept that this would be irrelevant to the political process in a society where power and authority were the basis upon which people made decisions, I have shown that the preferred way to act politically amongst the Maasai involves the use of influence. As a result, women may be able to influence the decisions reached by their husbands regarding stock, as Episode 2 (Chapter 3, p. 71-72) showed. Whether women succeed or not largely depends upon personal political competence.

But a very basic distinction that can be drawn between the concerns of men and women is epitomised by the statement "men care about cattle while women care about children". One can best describe this distinction in terms of Woodburn's (1982: 432) differentiation between "immediate-return systems" and "delayed-return systems" of subsistence. While I use

these terms here in a slightly different way to that suggested by Woodburn, they give an appropriate feeling for the differences in male and female concerns. Immediate-return I here take to mean the range of subsistence activities that relate to the day-to-day survival of the household. Delayed-return I here take to mean the range of subsistence activities that relate to the long-term, successful pursuit of pastoralism. I suggest that women largely concern themselves with the immediate-return needs of the household while men concern themselves with the delayed-return needs of the household. The regular activities undertaken by adult men and women clearly illustrate this distinction. Women, for example, collect water, firewood, maintain the houses and look after the children while men spend most of their time attending meetings, collecting stock debts, making marriage arrangements. They also involve themselves in activities with the stock that relate to their long-term welfare, such as going to the dip, salt lick or maintaining water holes (see Appendix 2). This is not to suggest that there is no overlap between the two concerns, but rather to suggest that the main focus of attention for each group, in terms of the regular tasks that they perform, fits this divide. This distinction is also a predictable one when one realises that men are often away from the household for extended periods of time, especially during the rainy season, when they go in search of debt animals, beer and camaraderie with their age-mates. When this happens a household can survive because women, in conjunction with their sons, handle the day-to-day necessities of the subsistence activities associated with the herds.

The implication of this distinction is that both areas of concern are necessary for the successful practice of pastoralism amongst the Maasai. I have shown that when a woman leaves home on a permanent basis, especially if she is an only wife, there is the potential for the social unit to disintegrate (cf. Dahl 1987: 133). In one case at Ilkerin when a man's wife left him he moved in with his mother so that he had someone who could look after his children and to milk the cows. Even when a man has more than one wife, as Episode 5 (Chapter 4, p. 97) showed, there are occasions when the presence of a woman as the mother of the man's children is required for the successful completion of ritual events.

But likewise, without the presence of a husband or a son to maintain links with the wider social network that provides access to stock in times of hardship, a household will also be in a precarious position. The fight between the two brothers outlined in Episode 10 (Chapter 6, p. 158)

shows the potential problems that arise when an adult man is not present in a household. This is also why households are so vulnerable to outside intervention when a man dies and there are no circumcised sons.

A consequence of the distinction between immediate-return and delayed-return concerns in the society is a difference in the perceived ambitions of women and men. It is therefore possible, at one level of analysis, to accept the statement that "men care for cattle while women care for children". This is because the overt concerns of men are with cattle and the overt concerns of women are with children. Women control the milk and other food that the household consumes on a daily basis. On the other hand, cattle are the continuing source of food and without them people cannot survive. To ensure that a family has access to cattle all the time requires that men put their energies into the creation and maintenance of a network of relationships which act as an insurance against periods of hardship. The age-set is one of the most significant arenas through which this is achieved. For example, the most common form of stock associate relationship is between age-mates and the arrangement of marriages between the sons and daughters of age-mates also strengthens these ties.

One can draw another interesting contrast between male and female concerns by looking at the importance of kinship links. For women agnatic links can remain important after marriage. Women may call on female agnates to assist them in times of difficulty, as did *Ng'oto* Pamet (Chapter 4, pp. 99-100), and the combined forces of a mother and daughter can reduce the possibility of a man parting with animals (see Episode 7, Chapter 5, p. 125). It is also not uncommon for a family to move to where a daughter's mother lives some time after marriage, thus maintaining affinal links (Chapter 2, pp. 36-37).

On the other hand, men are not encouraged to live close to their agnates after marriage because of the possibility of fights. This can occur either between a father and a son (see Spencer 1988: 234-235, Case 54) or between brothers (Episode 10, Chapter 6, p. 158). Such fights have the potential to create permanent rifts, and cut off access to animals within a family. When male agnates live apart from each other this is less likely to occur. Jacobs (1965: 215) says that a man often spends more time with his affines than his agnates because affines hold a common cause with the man in wishing to see the man's marriage succeed: both will gain in the long-term from the maintenance of the link and the access that it provides to a

new set of people who may be approached about cattle. Certainly sons-in-law may wish to locate themselves near a wife's father in order to place continuing demands on their father-in-laws' herds after the marriage. In Episodes 6 and 7 (Chapter 5, pp. 122-123 and 125 respectively) two of *Papa*'s son-in-laws sought livestock from him and *Menye* Moyioi's family also talked of moving to live at *enkang' empaash* to be closer to *Papa* and his herd. For women, agnates can provide immediate support and may give assistance to a woman when she is sick. In this way a woman is able to maintain a household under adverse circumstances. But for men there is always the danger of fighting with one's agnates over cattle. Consequently, in order to avoid this problem, brothers living in close physical proximity to each other is discouraged once they become the managers of their allotted herds. Instead affines are often a better group of kin to align oneself with, and to live close to, because there is less likelihood of there being a conflict of interests between the two groups that could lead to long-term disputes.

Whether it be men or women, the ways in which either the delayed-return needs or the immediate-return needs of the society are met is through the relationships that the individual has developed over time. One sort of relationship that is particularly important for women and which I have not yet discussed is that of the lover. This is a particularly appropriate relationship to look at because most of the benefits from it relate to immediate-return needs, whether it is for the man or woman involved in the relationship. In Chapter 3 I discussed 'adultery' and suggested that the Maasai rarely treat it as a problem in the way that Llewelyn-Davies (1978, 1981) and Spencer (1988) suggest. The reasons for this relate to a woman's involvement in the immediate-return needs of her family. Lover relationships can be the source of a range of items that are necessary for the day-to-day maintenance of a household and are very useful where people have no other way of acquiring such items.

7.2 Lovers

Lovers are a constant source of interest in *IlOitai*. Women hold joking conversations about them and they are a common source of sexual innuendo. Men also show an interest in finding out who is the lover of whom but are more restricted in their access to this information. In fact, lover relationships are an all-pervasive part of *IlOitai* society. I knew of no Maasai

woman in the Ilkerin area who had not had at least one lover during her married life which shows that the practice is basic to *IlOitai* social existence.[3]

The relationships often develop at ceremonies when men and women can come together from over a wide area and sit with each other while they drink beer and talk. On such occasions it is not uncommon to see assignations being made over a calabash of beer in some quiet corner away from the main activity. Once a mutual interest is shown it is then up to the man to arrange meeting with the woman on future occasions. Further meetings are usually nocturnal and occur when the man knows that his lover's husband is away. Often the man will arrive at his lover's house late at night and then leave again early in the morning before the children are awake. Because husbands can be away for weeks at a time, and everybody knows who is where, there is little chance of the lovers being caught. A man may also visit his lover during the day although this has the potential of arousing the suspicions of other men.

While lovers are unlikely to be caught red-handed it is also almost impossible to keep the relationship a secret. Women often know who are the lovers of their husbands in the area and there is often collusion between these women. In one instance, Maitukaiya said openly to her husband, *Papa*, that she thought he should spend the night with his lover because she was returning to her home in a couple of days. This woman, *Ng'oto* Dalamia (see Episode 3, Chapter 3, pp. 72-73), had been staying with her sister at *enkang' empaash* for some months helping with the household when there was a shortage of labour. But she was not the only woman at *enkang' empaash* who was *Papa's* lover at the time. Another woman (Fig. 2, House 14), who was a widow, had also been his lover for over a year. Maitukaiya and the woman were reasonably good friends and invited each other to their houses when they had brewed beer and borrowed small items from each other. Llewelyn-Davies (1978; 1981) makes the point that women are expected to become good friends of the lovers of their husbands and this is often the case.

Lover relationships vary greatly in their duration, some being no more than what might be called 'a one night stand' (although this is fairly

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[3]. This is different to women who were the children of Kikuyu/Maasai marriages and who had usually had some missionary education. Many of these women, who lived in the Morijo area, were disdainful of the practice and did not themselves indulge in it.

uncommon for reasons that will become evident) to others which last through the lifetimes of the two people who form the relationship. Most relationships fit somewhere in between, lasting from several months to a few years. People may discontinue a relationship and then re-established it if, for instance, they move away from each other and then find themselves living close together again.

There is also a great deal of variety in the number of lovers that an individual may have at any one time. For example, young men after *eunoto* and before their marriage have several lovers simultaneously and are often sharing the same lovers. *Isiankikin* also often have several lovers at any one time. But by the time a woman becomes of *entasat* status it is expected that she will no longer have any lovers. For men of *oltasat* status this is less likely to be the case and they may still visit one or two women on occasions. There are also relationships that endure a lifetime, suggesting a degree of emotional attachment between the couple that may not be found in marriage.

These relationships can be a very important way in which individuals gain access to resources other than stock. For instance, women whose husbands are poor in cattle may have to rely upon links with lovers in order to be able to feed their children. A common sight at the local development project on pay day was a line of the women sitting outside the office waiting for the men to get paid. When the men got paid these women would collect some cash from those of their lovers who were labourers. Men may also take advantage of these relationships and use a lover who comes from a wealthier family as a source of food and small material items as Episode 4 (Chapter 4, p. 96) showed. A good lover is therefore not only a sexual partner but also someone who looks after their lover's needs:

EPISODE 23.

> *Koko* and I were going to the scheme to deliver milk and buy supplies. A new shop had recently been opened near the scheme by a Maasai and in order to entice the women to spend their money at his shop, rather than at the project shop, he had undercut the project shop's prices. This made him very popular with the women and on our way to the scheme *Koko* told me that she was taking the owner of the new shop some milk because 'he was her lover'.

While *Koko* was joking, the example illustrates the perceptual link between lovers and providing for needs. *Koko*, who was well passed the age when a woman would still have lovers, described the shop owner in this way because she perceived his behaviour as like that of a lover; that is, he was seen as being concerned about the best interests of the women because he was keeping the prices of essential purchases low.

The example also illustrates that a sense of reciprocity underlies lover relationships. Another aspect of lover relationships illustrates the significance of this sense of sharing. Llewelyn-Davies' (1978: 232) has noted that women often call their lovers (who are of *olpayian* status) '*Olmurrani*'. She interprets this as expressing the "egalitarian and voluntary nature of the 'adulterous' relationship" (Llewelyn-Davies 1978: 232). While this might suggest an ideal of egalitarianism between the two, as Llewelyn-Davies' suggests, the use of the honorific, '*Olmurrani*', is also a complimentary way of addressing the man. It creates an atmosphere that is reminiscent of the time when both the man and the woman were freely involved in lover relationships, a time of relative sexual freedom. But as a moran a man was also considered to be brave, generous, loyal to friends, and protective of his lover. The reference back to this time is therefore also a reference to the communitas of the experience, a time that emphasised the need to share with others. This point is illustrated by the case presented in Spencer (1988: 114, Case 25) where a widow was able to appeal to the age-set who were moran when she was a girl for assistance. Addressing a lover as '*Olmurrani*' is therefore a reminder of the ethic of sharing that exemplifies both that period of a man's life in the past when he was *olmurrani* and also of the nature of the current lover relationship. An important aspect of lover relationships is this practice of sharing.

For women in particular, this aspect of having lovers can be important. They can provide an informal network of people who may be called upon to help in a crisis. Women recognise this and support each other in their dealings with their lovers. For example a woman may borrow something from another woman in order to provide hospitality for her lover. This is perfectly acceptable because the woman whom one has obliged may in turn reciprocate the favour at some later date.

One could say that looking after one's lover's needs is simply an expression of Maasai hospitality. This could be justified on the grounds that any form of hospitality always has the potential to be reciprocated.

However, a lover relationship has the potential to affect a wider group of people than just the man and woman involved in it. I have already noted that a woman is expected to become friends with her husband's lover. When this is the case, the wife of the man involved in the lover relationship can also seek favours and gifts, especially as food, from her husband's lover. In one case at Ilkerin a woman was not only collecting money off one of her lovers who worked at the development project, but was also getting milk on a daily basis from one of her husband's lovers.

If lover relationships are used to gain access to food and money then they are likely to create a drain on a family's resources. But, on the other hand, because they are also a potential source of items for every family, they act as a means of redistribution of resources within the society. For the women there never seems to be any great concern about who their husbands are the lovers of and sometimes a woman may actively encourage her husband to become involved with a particular woman. Any dissent usually comes from individuals outside the immediate threesome because other concerns may seem more important. Amongst members of one family at Ilkerin there was a frequent bemoaning of the fact that the woman was giving too much attention to her current lover. But this never became a public complaint, possibly because everybody knew that they too could have the same accusation levelled against them.

Because these relationships are of an informal nature the 'transactions' that take place within their domain are also of an informal nature. The exchanges that occur around lover relationships are usually concerned with those elements in the production process that are controlled by women and that relate to the day-to-day maintenance of the household. Thus lover-relationship exchanges usually involve such things as milk, food, beer, material items and small amounts of money. But one should not underestimate the significance of these exchanges because they can make a substantial difference to the short-term welfare of a family. In the case of *Ole* Sipei, it was largely through his wife that the family managed to survive when he sold all his animals and before the marriage of his eldest daughter. Although Seiyan was not from the area and had no kin to rely on, she managed to get money and food for her children through her lovers and the wives of her husband's lovers. She said that she hated doing this because it was like begging but it did mean that the family survived and retained its autonomy.

One can make a useful comparison here between the bonds created by marriage and those formed through lovers. On marriage a new set of links is created through the relatives of one's wife. This is a group that is publicly recognised and exists as a pre-determined group of individuals upon whom one can call for assistance. A lover relationship, however, is not generally advertised. The limits of those whom one can call upon are much more confined and do not usually extend beyond the lover or the spouse of the lover. Links through lovers are also only exploited in the female to female, or female to male, realms of interaction. Men never call upon a lover's husband for support because of the potential conflicts that may arise. A man calling upon the resources of a lover's husband would automatically bring the relationship into public view. Women are able to avoid this because the things that they ask for, and the demands placed upon them, relate to small material items and food.

Thus the exchange networks based on lover relationships are female focused. They do not provide access to stock. The exchange of animals is the domain of men and is a very public, visible act. Marriage is one of the occasions on which stock move from one family to another. The two sorts of relationships therefore serve different but complementary purposes within the society. Marriage involves the establishment of a new set of relationships of a permanent nature and involves the transfer of stock, while lover relationships have no sense of pre-determined permanency to them and involve the sharing of small items. Thus, while marriage creates long-term interdependency, lover relationships can provide short-term security.

One can now see why relationships with moran are so problematic. Moran are liminal members of society who have no access to resources. This means that in a material sense the relationships cannot involve reciprocity. The relationships are therefore a threat to the social order. There are two reasons for this. First, such liaisons involve the movement of resources in only one direction, causing a drain on the domestic unit; and second, they are more blatantly sexual in nature than are other lover relationships because there can be no reciprocity. While any lover relationship is likely to cause a drain on a family's resources I have suggested that because the phenomenon is common there is a levelling effect. Lover relationships can act to redistribute wealth from the rich to the poor, rather than just from women to men or men to women. But with moran the movement is always from the woman and her household to the moran. One can therefore see the relationship as being unproductive

because only one party in the relationship gains materially from it. While moran as lovers do not overtly concern the women, one can see why they are a problem for the men.

I have also shown how the lover relationships of a wife can affect a husband (Episode 4, Chapter 4, p. 96). Once again, it is how a woman manages these relationships that is important in terms of the possibility of reprisals from her husband. If a woman adequately provides for her husband then he is unlikely to investigate who are the lovers of his wife and create a scene. There is also the possibility that he may indirectly benefit from the liaisons of his wives.

In those cases where a husband does contest a relationship then this could lead to a fight between the man and his wife, rather than between the man and the lover. If a wife felt this was an unjustified attack then she could leave home and may end up seeking protection from her lover. In one case Spencer (1988: 199-200, Case 41) cites, when a woman ran away from her husband, and despite beatings and threats from her father, she finally ended up living with, and married to, a former lover. For a husband to make public a lover relationship and show anger over it could therefore lead to the dissolution of the marriage as well as the possible embarrassment of having one's wife go and live with a lover.

In summary, lover relationships provide a useful means by which women in particular, but also men, can meet the immediate-return needs of their pastoral existence. The produce from the animals is in the hands of the women and they are able to redistribute this as they wish, and usually without question, as long as the needs of a woman's own family are also met. If this is difficult for a woman to achieve then she may be the benefactor of her lovers, rather than a provider to either them or their wives. The system is therefore potentially reciprocal. But this can and does only impact on immediate-return needs because the transactions involved relate to the resources controlled by the women. Delayed-return needs are largely articulated through stock and are the affair of the men.[4] Of particular significance here are relationships based on the exchange of stock.

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[4]. Some of these exchanges relate to formal links through marriage. But others relate to the informal network of associates that a man builds up over the years (many through the age-set).

7.3 Stock Associates

Stock associates are individuals bound together by the transfer of an animal as a gift from one person to another. Gulliver (1955) adopted the term to describe relationships of this nature amongst the Jie and Turkana, but others have recognised that it is a common feature of many pastoral societies in East Africa (Dahl 1979; Dyson-Hudson 1966; Jacobs 1965; Spencer 1965, 1973).

There are a number of ways in which people can form these relationships. They can, for instance, be formally defined relationships such as those that relate to marriage, where a man gives various members of his wife's family animals as a sign of "respect" (Jacobs 1965: 159).[5] But they can also be based on links of agnatic kinship. Jacobs (1965: 160) lists examples of such gifts as: a bull-calf given by a man to his sister, full-brother's wife or his father's wife; and a bullock or cow given by a man to his mother's brother or his wife's brother. But there are also other prescribed gifts that a man gives to his in-laws such as the sheep that a man gives his mother-in-law and the bullock that a man gives his father-in-law. The majority of gifts a man gives are to those agnates whom he should sexually avoid (Jacobs 1965: 160; Spencer 1988: 31).

Bonds based on kinship and marriage are not the only source of these relationships. While structural factors dictate who will be some of one's stock associates, many relationships are entered into voluntarily. One of the most common such exchanges is between age-mates. Men form at least some of these relationships on friendships that they made during moranhood. A heifer or a cow may be promised to a close friend and then handed over once the person has control over his allotted herd. Long before an animal has changed hands individuals may recognise the intent of the exchange by using the reciprocal form of address. Young men who go trading together usually do so in groups on the basis of a set of interlinking friendships based on gifts of cattle. They form small groups (of approximately 4 to 6 individuals) and constantly address each other with the appropriate reciprocal term for the animal given as a gift. Young men who do not have some control over their allotted herd are therefore at a

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[5]. Co-wives and mothers-in-law are also expected to promise a new bride animals on her arrival in her husband's *enkang'* but this can only be done with the approval of a woman's husband.

disadvantage in this process of building up a number of stock associates. While stock associate relationships can be formed over a lifetime by a man, the earlier that one starts to create these ties the more advantageous it is to a man's long-term security.

These relationships are the constant source of social activity for mature men: men spend a great deal of time, especially in the wet season, visiting stock associates and reminding them of the bond, attending ceremonies in their homesteads or claiming animals from them when times are difficult. These relationships involve "mutual assistance and mutual respect" (Gulliver 1955: 203); maintenance over a lifetime; and are "the beginning of a potentially unceasing chain of exchanges and other assistance" (Gulliver 1955: 210).

Stock associate relationships between men are a specific example of a wider range of 'exchange' relationships which need not be confined to gifts of livestock. People recognise these relationships through the use of a reciprocal form of address which are usually, although not always, distinguished by the prefix '*Pa-*'. The prefix '*Pa-*' is difficult to translate. For example, Voshaar (1979: 54) translates it as meaning "the sharer of ...", while Talle (1988: 88) translates it as meaning the "giver [or the] recipient of ...". But no distinction is made between the giver and the recipient of the gift in the use of the term and the gift is never actually shared. People can also use the reciprocal terms of address, as was shown with the use of '*Entawuo*' in Episode 14 (Chapter 6, pp. 171-172), without any gift having been given. It is therefore probably more appropriate to translate '*Pa-...*' with an expression like 'the one of the ...'. Thus, to give just two examples of these expressions, '*Paker*' can be translated as 'the one of the ewe', an expression that can be used when a man gives his mother-in-law a sheep; or '*Pashe*' as 'the one of the heifer', an expression that can be used when a man gives his sister-in-law a calf.[6]

But, I suggested above, the use of reciprocal forms of address (prefixed with '*Pa-*') is confined not only to terms derived from words for livestock. For example, Hollis (1905: 323) gives the example of individuals giving a gift of a red bead (sing. *oltureshi*; pl. *ilturesh*) to someone they wished to treat as a "brother" or "sister". He says that the individuals

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[6]. Comprehensive lists of these terms are given in Hollis (1910), Mol (n.d.: 131) and Talle (1988: 88, fn. 1).

henceforth addressed each other as "*Patureshi*" (Hollis 1905: 323). One example that occurred during fieldwork was a case of a woman addressing another woman as '*Pasile*' ('the one of the debt') following the former assisting the latter in brewing beer for a ceremony, and Talle (1988: 88, fn. 1) also talks of girls addressing each other reciprocally following the exchange of such items as "brass ornaments, metal rings, beads, etc. (*egisoyai*)". The range of terms that can be used with the prefix '*Pa-*' therefore seems only to be limited by the ingenuity of the speaker.

While the use of the prefix '*Pa-*' may distinguish reciprocal terms of address this is not always the case. There are a range of other reciprocal terms of address which have no such prefix. Commonly heard examples of these are:

'*Entawuo*'	'Heifer';
'*Osotua*'	'Friend' (or 'Stock Friend'; lit 'umbilical cord');
'*Olcore* (*lai*)'	'Friend';
'*Olang'ata lai*'	'My Lover'.

Further examples that have been noted by other authors are "*Enkiyu*" ("Brisket-fat") between ritual partners of the Great Ox feast (Jacobs 1965: 286; Spencer 1988: 264) and "*Olpiroi*" ("Firestick") between individuals from alternate age-sets (Jacobs 1965: 283). One can see that this range of terms is neither confined to those contexts which involve the giving of an animal as a gift, nor are they solely used between men. But the vast majority of the cases are instances that involve gifts of livestock, commonly given to relatives or between male friends who are stock associates.

The use of these terms, as Episode 14 (Chapter 6, pp. 171-172) illustrated, can be anticipatory in nature, just as the promise of the gift can signify a friendship (see Chapter 6). The device of addressing people with a reciprocal form of address is therefore one more example of the way in which people can develop links with others:

EPISODE 24.

> Once I owned cattle I found that the men took a great deal more interest in my activities. It became a fairly common thing for some of those who lived in surrounding *inkang'itie* to come and visit me, tell me the news and ask for small items such as tobacco. One day, *Ole* Leken, a man who I could not remember having seen before came to see me. He told me who he was and introduced the subject of

friendships by telling me how good it is for people to be friends with each other and what advantages this has for those who are involved. He then said that he wished to become my '*osotua*' (friend; lit. 'umbilical cord') so that we would be friends and therefore able to exchange things. I told him that I would think about what he had said. He then asked me if I could give him 400 shillings so that he could go and look for cattle. I replied that I could not give him 400 shillings immediately because I did not have that much cash on me. He said that this was all right and that he would come back to see me later on.

After he had left both Maitukaiya and *Koko* came to see what he had wanted. I told them what he had said and they immediately pooh-poohed the idea, explaining that I could not be everybody's '*osotua*'. The next day *Ng'oto* Moyioi, the eldest daughter of the family, who lived in *enkang'* where the man had come from called me to go and see her. She gave me tea and told me that she had heard what *Ole* Leken had said to me the previous day. She told me that she thought that this was not good because he was not a good man. She reiterated that I could not be everybody's '*osotua*'.

In this example *Ole* Leken came to me wishing to become a friend. Because I did not reject this possibility, *Ole* Leken acted upon the potential of the relationship by asking me for 400 shillings. The underlying logic of this request was that if we became friends then the transaction would form a part of this reciprocal relationship.

The Episode also shows the potential dilemma that can arise from becoming another person's close friend, or *osotua*. The reaction of the family to *Ole* Leken's overture is one of caution and each member of the family reminded me that I could not be everybody's *osotua*. This shows that there is always the potential for anyone who has resources that are perceived by others to be desirable, to be overwhelmed with requests. People recognise that one cannot give to everybody or this would leave one with nothing. Voshaar (1979: 55-56) gives an example of a man who had a large herd but who was constantly being asked to give money and animals to his relatives. This happened so often that he was left with only a small milch herd. Then when a brother died, he was obliged to look after the widow. Voshaar (1979: 56) comments that this gave the man "great honour" and created reciprocal obligations, but that it had also drained his resources. The danger in such cases is that those who have made requests will be unable or unwilling to

reciprocate the generosity of the giver when their help is needed. As a person who others perceive as being wealthy it is important to be able to balance the external demands placed upon one with one's own needs.

Forming close alliances with others is always therefore a matter of compromise. One picks one's partners in exchange relationships according to one's perceptions of the potential of these relationships (cf. Gulliver 1955: 221-222). Moranhood, because of the sense of communitas that goes with the experience, is a time when many of these relationships are formed. But the art of the successful pastoralist is to be able to build up a set of stock associates with men who are likely to honour the obligations of the relationship if and when one is in difficulty. This is a matter of personal competence. Part of one's strategy may be to build up links with men from neighbouring sections of the Maasai and this is most easily accomplished during moranhood when young men roam widely over Maasailand (cf. Gulliver 1955: 211-212, 216-217).[7] One cannot underestimate the importance of these links as the example of the family from *IlPurko* who moved into *enkang' empaash* during a drought at *Olpusimoru* shows. *IlOitai* activated several such links with *IlPurko* during the drought at Ilkerin in 1976 and *IlPurko* activated links with *IlOitai* in 1982.

But the most significant factor about stock associate relationships is that they provide long-term security for a man and his family. In this sense one can contrast them with the practice of taking lovers which are informal, 'private' relationships that involve the exchange of small items and are bound up with the exchanges that relate to immediate needs. On the other hand, stock associates are formal, 'public' relationships that involve the exchange of substantial items and may largely revolve around anticipated future needs. Women, because they do not own cattle, are unable to be part of this network of stock associates but do have some control over whether their husbands give particular animals to their friends. Women often defend their rights over animals by arguing their case in terms of the short term or immediate-return needs of the family as Episodes 2 (Chapter 3, p. 71-72), 6 and 7 (Chapter 6, pp. 122-123 and 125 respectively)

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[7]. While this is the time when raids are most frequently made on neighbouring tribes or sections of the Maasai and it might therefore be thought that *ilmurran* from different sections are antagonistic towards each other, these raids may be carried out as joint raids between sections and in those undertaken by the moran in the Ilkerin area in the early 1980s the raids were made on cattle based in *inkang'itie*, not on those held at *imanyat*.

stock to others because this would leave them with insufficient food to feed their families. These examples, as well as that of Seiyan (Episode 1, Chapter 3, pp. 70-71), show that the immediate needs of the family preoccupy the minds of the women.

But stock associates can only be built up with others if one has a herd of animals. The two most likely causes for a man not having any animals are either as a result of a natural disaster or because he has sold his animals in order to buy alcohol.[8] The two situations have quite different consequences. Those who lose their animals because of natural disasters are treated with understanding because the disaster is 'an act of God' that is beyond the control of the individual. It is an event that could happen to any one. Relationships based on past exchanges of animals can be effectively called upon in order to re-establish a herd. The system of links that are built up between individuals over the years becomes the inherent means by which one is able to re-enter the pastoral economy. This system of relationships is therefore incredibly important for individuals who have lost their animals. It also helps explain why individuals can so successfully achieve reincorporation into the pastoral economy after major natural disasters such as those which occurred in the late nineteenth century (Waller 1976).

On the other hand, a person who has sold all their animals for drink is an individual who shows a lack of self control. While past links may have been built up and stock associates made, the behaviour of the man suggests that any future gifts of animals are likely to remain unreciprocated. To take the example of *Ole* Sipei (Episode 3, Chapter 3, pp. 72-73), he had not only sold all his own animals but he then proceeded to sell those animals that were given to him by his age-mates. No age-mate could ever therefore expect to receive any stock in return from these gifts. Thus while the community tolerated *Ole* Sipei because of his rhetorical ability, his close age-mates thought he was a liability because of the demands he made on them for stock which were always unreciprocated. Relationships with a person like *Ole* Sipei are therefore in many ways similar to the lover relationships that women have with moran: they lack the element of reciprocity that is so basic to the way in which the Maasai practice pastoralism.

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[8]. A third possibility exists in the case of young men whose fathers have died before they have been circumcised where an uncle may take over the herd and effectively disinherit the sons (see Chapter 4).

In summary, any sort of relationship in Maasai society has the potential to involve people in a series of reciprocal obligations. These relationships can be of a formal nature, such as those bound up with kinship and marriage, or informal in nature, like the taking of a lover. One of the ways in which people express the nature of a relationship and the obligations that go with it is through the use of an appropriate reciprocal form of address. In these cases using the appropriate term of address is one way in which people can continually remind each other of the obligatory nature of the relationship. Once this process is put in place it involves a continual movement back and forth that is reminiscent of the to and fro of discourse. As participants in this process, people do not think in terms of beginnings and endings. Rather, life consists of a string of events that, depending on the circumstances, impact on people's existence to a greater or lesser extent. The significance of any single event can also vary with time: what seems important now may seem irrelevant in the light of later developments and vice versa. But people exhibit a variety of reactions to changing circumstances. And because the system allows individuals to change their minds without 'loosing face' people are able to adapt to new conditions.

7.4 Summary

I have argued in this thesis that both men and women in Maasai society are able to utilise the same sorts of political techniques in order to achieve desired ends. Where the difference arises is in the different nature of the resources that each can employ to maintain relationships. Consequently the differences that exist between gender and age categories do not imply differentiation based on political domination. Where other differences lie are in the conceptions that people have of themselves and their purposes in life. The ideological view that 'men care about cattle while women care about children' reflects this distinction. Men have cattle, control their distribution and maintain a wide network of associates through stock associates. They also are members of an age-set which encourages them to give gifts of animals for ceremonial purposes and to their fellow age-mates. It is at age-set meetings that male business is discussed, such as the arrangement of age-set rituals, the settling of disputes and any concerns there may be over pasture, water or disease in the animals. Women bear and nurture the children and maintain a small support network based around the home of female relatives and close friends. No pre-existing

association exists which incorporates women, but they do come together in large numbers when their fertility is threatened. Rearing and nurturing children therefore concerns the women. These differences suggest a system based on complementarity rather than subordination or 'superordination' (cf. Gilmore 1990; Sciama 1981).

Thus, while the methods, by which both men and women seek to achieve desired ends, are based on the same principles, the domains in which adult men and women are likely to operate differ. The male focus on the demands of the age-set, as against the female focus on the needs of the family, is therefore a potential source of tension within the family (cf. Baxter & Almagor 1978).

But I have shown that both male and female orientations actually seek to maintain the family and its herds. Women, while not owning cattle, do have some control over the animals that are in their care. They are also actively involved in the maintenance of the herds. They look after young and sick animal and help water the animals during the dry season. Men are also not completely disinterested in the upbringing of their children. Without an heir a man has no one to inherit his herds and without boys becoming moran a man has no role to fulfil as a firestick elder to a younger generation of males entering the age-set system. In addition a man gains bridewealth and new groups of affinal kin when his daughters marry. Therefore the ideology of men having cattle and women having children masks a more complex reality than that which is expressed by the idea. In order to be a successful unit in the pastoral system both adult males and females must secure co-operation and support. It is therefore in this area of interaction that strategy is crucial.

The techniques and strategies that people use to achieve desired ends are open to everybody: competence is what improves one's chances of success rather than one's location within a classificatory system. But the ambitions of men and women are different. This is because the domains in which men and women function are distinct from each other. Men rely on the age-set supporting them in their dealings with others while women can gain support and assistance from other women in an informal and personal way. Thus, because there is a difference in the ambitions of men and women the domains within which each group acts tend to be distinct. For instance, women may rely heavily on their lovers for assistance with the day-to-day subsistence needs of a family and this is a private relationship

that is not publicly displayed. But men may also rely on female lovers for the same purposes. Likewise, men usually resolve disputes through the age-set system which provides a public forum for debate. But women may also use the age-sets to assist them, as Episodes 1 and 3 (Chapter 3, pp. 70-71 and 72-73 respectively), and some of the cases in Spencer's ethnography (e.g. 1988: 114, 244), show.

Another area of difference that affects the concerns of women and men relates to the resources that each control. Men control livestock while women control the products of the herds and their own labour. Both are necessary in order to form a successful pastoral unit and this is important to remember if one is to understand why men do not dominate women. Because the resources of men and women complement each other it does not make sense for men to exert power over their wives for fear of the potential repercussions. As I have said, to do so may lead to the dissolution of the marriage itself. One can also not assume that women do not gain support from men when they leave their husbands. A father may be against the actions of a daughter when she moves out of her home and leaves her husband (e.g. Spencer 1988: 199-200, Case 41). But some fathers support their daughters and may even go so far as to provide them with animals to milk when they find another man to live with (see Chapter 3). Once again one can see that the competence of the individual is crucial to the process of negotiation that underlies Maasai social existence. The categorical differences provide the basis upon which individuals are able to frame the strategies they employ in order to fulfil their ambitions. It is therefore misleading to view an inequality of the sexes as underlying the political process amongst the Maasai.

CHAPTER EIGHT
CONCLUSIONS

I suggested in the Introduction to this thesis that the stereotype of the Maasai as a conservative people is a misguided one. While it is a stereotype that has informed the interactions between successive governments and the Maasai, it has not aided us in our understanding of the nature of Maasai society. The experience of living with the Maasai provides a very different view. It suggests that what appears as Maasai conservatism is actually a misreading of Maasai views regarding political procedure. To examine this problem I have focused on the political process amongst *IlOitai* Maasai of Kenya.

There are no obvious political institutions that provide a framework for political activity in *IlOitai* society. The kinship terminology is teknonymic and patronymic and this correlates with shallow genealogies and a constant sundering of wider kinship networks. Kinship therefore does not provide a framework for establishing political groups. Rather, politics is conducted through the interactions of everyday life. But whilst politics is part of everyday life, everyday life is not always part of politics. In order to distinguish between the two I have treated those interactions where there is a contest over a desired outcome as being political.

Many anthropological studies suggest that access to resources and power may be correlated with different social groups. This is a common argument used for both relatively egalitarian societies and for highly structured societies (Harris & Young 1981; Meillassoux 1981; Rosaldo 1974). Thus in the absence of overt institutions one can assume that the social categorisation of individuals forms the basis for political activity (Barth 1966; Cohen & Comaroff 1976). This is because relationships between people define categories. In this thesis I discuss these categories in order to provide a framework for the study of the political process (Chapter 3).

A number of authors suggest that Maasai women are subordinate to men (Jacobs 1965; Llewelyn-Davies 1978, 1981; Spencer 1988). In one case this has been correlated with the different number of stages in male and female life cycles (Llewelyn-Davies 1978, 1981). The data presented in this thesis refutes this argument. I suggest that there are the same number

of life cycle stages for *IlOitai* men and women and that it is possible to establish equivalencies between these stages (Chapter 3).

The one problematic equivalence is between *isiankikin* and *ilmurran*. People say that *isiankikin* are irresponsible, are not good home keepers, and have many lovers. But this time is also talked of as being the pinnacle of a woman's life experience. Likewise, being *ilmurran* is the pinnacle of the male life experience. During this period men lack self control, go on raids and have several lovers, some of whom may be married women. Whilst these stages appear to be similar there is a marked difference in the social content of the two. *Isiankikin* are married, located in the domestic context, and usually starting to bear children. They have responsibilities to milk stock, maintain a household and provide food for their husbands. Of greatest concern to *isiankikin* is the need to provide for their families. It is this ethic that dominates an adult woman's life and continues into old age.

Ilmurran, on the other hand, are located in a liminal context outside normal social practice. Society accepts their irresponsibility. More important, it is this period that socialises males into the ethic of sharing and giving. This ethic is central to being a member of an age-set.

Once a man becomes an elder he can take control of his mother's allotted herd. This control allows men to enter into wider exchange networks. Whilst men may engage in these exchanges they do not control the milk that their herds produce. The division between control over animals and control over the produce of the animals is central to the definition of Maasai gender categories. It also has consequences for the political process in Maasai society. Both men and women are empowered through control over resources even though the resource controlled by women (the produce of the animals) is provided by a resource controlled by men (the family herds). The labour of women is also crucial to the physical maintenance of the household. The articulation of these resources ensures that there is a balance between men and women in a way that is similar to the balance that exists between men and men, and between women and women. The age-set rituals also code this balance between men and women. The social transformation of boys into men requires active involvement of women who transform the male body. A repeated theme throughout the sequence of age-set rituals is the shaving of moran by their mothers. My own experience of the trouble taken to collect a mother who

had run away prior to her son's circumcision illustrates the importance of women in the social transformation of males (Chapter 4). I also cite an example of a woman presenting and winning her own case before her husband's age-set (Chapter 3). These factors suggest that women are not members of a subordinate group who are jural minors.

IlOitai culturally value the maintenance of relationships. Attempts by one party to force their will on others is, in practice, disruptive (Chapter 6). Wives moving out of a marriage and brothers separating after disputes are not uncommon events. Experiences of these types of social disruption predispose *IlOitai* to avoid confrontations as a result of using power or authority. In my experience, when these confrontations do occur the initiating party will often try to re-establish the relationship through a process of reconciliation. *IlOitai* politics tends to emphasise the avoidance of confrontation. Consensus and the construction of arguments are central to the process. These are political techniques based on influence. By using them people reject the use of power and authority as the basis for making decisions (Chapters 4 and 5). An influential political style presupposes that people do not act out of unbridled self-interest. This contrasts with the idea of an individual desiring to maximise profit, an assumption that underlies many transactional studies (cf. Chapter 1 and Spencer 1965: 181). Success, when using influence, depends on personal competence.

It is through socialisation that individuals learn the techniques and strategies that go to make up the Maasai political repertoire (Bourdieu 1977: 87). The incorporation of young children into the process occurs through their asking for things from other people and learning to imitate adult ways of relating to each other (Chapter 6). These tasks provide children with an opportunity to experiment with different techniques of persuasion. They also learn how to construct and present an argument. The example of *Ole* Sipei illustrates the importance of dialogue. While he was an incompetent pastoralist, people admired his rhetorical ability (Chapter 6).

In presenting a case individuals seek to convince others of the validity of their argument. To create the desired impression involves the management of meaning. Although opportunities to practise and experiment with political techniques occur from an early age, not all *IlOitai* have the same political competence. I describe the consequences of a husband's death in two families to illustrate this point (Chapter 4). In one

case the woman and her children lost the family's herds. In the other the family still controls the herds. In these cases the only difference is in the political competence of the wives of the dead men.

It would be all too easy to treat the lack of political competence of the individual as reflecting the subordination of a social group, especially if one accepted the rhetorical statements made by people as being the only sustainable interpretation of 'reality'. Both Maasai men and women accept the statement that "men care about cattle while women care about children" (Llewelyn-Davies 1978: 208). This can be understood in two ways. It can be seen as a simple statement of a physical 'reality', or as a shorthand way in which the Maasai present different political pre-occupations. Maasai practice suggests that the latter provides a better understanding of this statement.

Extensive exchange networks underlie patterns of caring for cattle and ensure the long-term viability of the family herds. These patterns involve a system of "delayed-return" (Woodburn 1982: 432). Concerns about fertility and the maintenance and reproduction of the domestic unit are the domain of the women. Caring for children is therefore another way of saying that women's concerns are with the production of children and the feeding of the family. Their practices are directed towards a form of "immediate-return" (Woodburn 1982: 432). The different concerns of men and women result in tensions within the domestic unit. Thus for the successful social reproduction of the household to occur women and men continually involve themselves in negotiating out appropriate strategies (Chapter 7). Both men and women use their available resources to show that their concerns cannot be ignored. But the arguments that each side puts forward usually determine the specific outcomes. In negotiating strategies within the family both men and women use influential political techniques because attempts to use power or to invoke authority can result in the dissolution of the family unit. Contexts outside the family reproduce this style of politics: age-set meetings reach consensus through discussion and debate; and discussion and debate play an important role in ritual events.

In Maasai society the use of authority and power is potentially disruptive. Their use can cause the break up of social ties that have been constructed over many years. Social disruption may threaten both the long-term viability of the family's resource base and the short-term maintenance

of the family unit. It is for these reasons that influence lies at the core of Maasai politics.

The argument advanced in this thesis depends on the close observation of the social transactions among a small group of *IlOitai* Maasai (a settlement of approximately 60 people). It is through an examination of the content of these transactions that I have been able to identify the different concerns of women and men. Without a transactional framework I would probably have unreservedly accepted many *IlOitai* statements. One of the advantages of a transactional approach is that it has forced me to confront the apparent discrepancies that exist between the rhetoric and the 'reality' of Maasai existence.

APPENDIX 1
Sections of the Maasai

I carried out the research for this thesis amongst *IlOitai* Maasai of Kenya, between March 1981 and December 1982. *IlOitai* are one of more than 16 different sections of the Maasai located in Kenya and Tanzania.[1] The most frequently referred to sections of the Maasai are: *IlAitayok*, *IlDalalekutuk*, *IlDamat*, *IlKaputiei*, *IlKeekonyokie*, *IlKisonko*, *IlMatapato*, *IlMoitanik*, *IlOitai*, *IlOitokitok* (the Kenyan off-shoot of *IlKisonko*), *IlOodokilani*, *IlPurko*, *IlSalei*, *ISiria*, *ISiringet* and *IlWuasinkishu*. But there is a tendency in the literature to speak of the Maasai as a unitary whole (cf. Spencer 1988: 2). This makes it difficult to assess to what degree there are differences between the sections. Until there is a comparative cross-sectional study published on the Maasai the confusion will remain.

Despite this cautionary note, the comparative material shows that the underlying political principles are substantially the same for each section of the Maasai. As a result, I have incorporated the findings of other researchers wherever appropriate.

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[1]. It is appropriate to note here that while Llewelyn-Davies' (1976; 1978; 1981) research was in the Loita area it was amongst *oloonkidong'i* sub-clan who are ritual experts. The behaviour of these ritual experts may be distinctive from that of *IlOitai*. In the same way, this principle also holds for *ilkunono*, the blacksmiths, who also live in the Loita Hills (cf. Galaty 1977; 1979). Part of Jacobs' (n.d.; 1965), Talle's (1987; 1988) and Voshaar's (1979) research was amongst *IlOitai* but in their writings they do not distinguish between their *IlOitai* material and that from other sections of the Maasai.

APPENDIX 2
Activities of the Maasai

Frequency	Activities of Women	Activities of Men
DAILY	Collecting water Cleaning calabashes Caring for children Cooking Opening and closing the gate	Supervising the herds
REGULAR	Collecting firewood Shaving Mending Cleaning the calf pen Going to the shops Grinding snuff	Attending meetings Making leatherwork for the animals Branding animals Taking stock to the dip Collecting honey for beer
RARE	Going to the dip	Taking animals to the salt lick Shopping for major items
WET	Plastering the house Brewing beer Churning milk	Collecting stock debts Making marriage arrangements Visiting other areas
DRY	Watering the stock Tending young animals Tending sick animals	Digging water holes Maintaining water holes Going out with stock (rare)
YEARS	Building new houses	Building new fences
	Activities of Young Women	**Activities of Young Men**
	Making beadwork	Trading stock at major markets
	Activities of Girls	**Activities of Boys**
	Herding of small stock Making beadwork	Herding of small stock Herding the cows Making things from wood Composing and singing songs

GLOSSARY

Glossary of Maa words appearing in the text. Where terms derive from published works the source is indicated The following abbreviations are used:

adj.	adjective	rit.	ritual
conj.	conjunction	Sw.	Swahili word
imp.	imperative	t-a.	term of address
lcs.	life cycle stage term	t-a/r.	term of address or reference
lit.	literally	t-r.	term of reference
loc.	location or place name	v.	verb
n.	noun	v. aux.	verbal auxiliary
pl.	plural	v. neut.	neuter verb form
pt.	plant name	?	uncertain meaning

WORD	MEANING
aider	v. to be capable, able.
aidim	v. to be capable, able.
aiguena	v. to discuss.
aikirikira	v. to shiver (Spencer 1988: 120).
aimalimal	v. to ostracise (Jacobs 1965: 349).
ainosa ilomon	to tell the news, lit. 'to eat the news' (see Episode 13).
aitodol	v. to show, point out, allocate.
aitore	v. to control, command, rule.
akueniyie	v. to laugh at, ridicule - a form of sanction (Jacobs 1965: 348).
alaaki	v. to compensate (Jacobs 1965: 349).
alaisho naikarsei	v. to suffer loss of privileges- a form of sanction (Jacobs 1965: 348).
amit	v. to refuse, forbid.

WORD	MEANING
amor	v. to insult, abuse - form of sanction (Jacobs 1965: 348).
Apaayia!	t-a. meaning (?) man - part of greeting between men of same age. (see Episode 14).
apiak	v. to be mean, stingy.
aposhoo	v. to shake (Spencer 1988: 120).
apula	n. distant affines (Jacobs 1965: 213)
auluo	n. area outside fence of *enkang'*.
ayiolo	v. to know.
boo	n. area inside fence of *enkang* but outside the house.
Eero!	t-a. O youth!, O boy! (see Episode 12).
egisoyai	n. ornaments (Talle 1988: 88, fn. 1).
eilata (pl. *iila*)	n. rendered fat, oil.
eisidai	lit. 'it is good' (see Episode 9).
eitorrono	lit. 'it is bad' (see Episode 1).
eitu	v. aux. not yet.
elet	n. single-family *enkang'* (Jacobs 1965: 222).
emakate (pl. *imakati*)	n. Magadi soda.
emanyata (pl. *imanyat*)	n. ceremonial village.
embarish (pl. *imbarisho*)	n. feathered headdress worn by newly circumcised males.
embarnoti (pl. *imbarnot*)	n. shaved female.
emowuo o lkiteng'	n. rit. lit. 'the horn of the ox'.
empikas (pl. *impikasin*)	n. forceful delegation.
emuatata (pl. *imuatat*)	n. small-stock pen.
emurt (pl. *imurto*)	n. deputy spokesman, lit. neck'.
emurate (pl. *imurat*)	n. circumcision.
emurt narok	n. blue-beaded necklace, lit. 'the neck of blue'.
enaabooshoke	n. lungs and heart.

WORD	MEANING
enaisho (pl. *inaishi*)	n. beer, honey.
enamuke (pl. *inamuka*)	n. leather sandals.
Encore Emuny	n. loc. Ngong.
endebai (pl. *indeba*)	n. beaded necklet worn by females.
endung'ore	n. rit. lit. 'the cutting'.
Ene ...	t-r. Daughter (of) ... (Mol n.d.: 52). Insulting in *IlOitai*.
engolon	n. strength.
engoro	n. anger.
eng'udi (pl. *ing'udisin*)	n. long walking stick.
EnkAi	n. God, rain.
enkaibartani (pl. *inkaibartak*)	n. lcs. female initiate.
enkaini	n. co-wife (Mol n.d.: 133).
enkanashe (pl. *inkanashera*)	n. sister.
enkang' (pl. *inkang'itie*)	n. village, settlement, home.
enkang' empaash	n. village in which fieldwork was undertaken.
enkang' oo lorikan	n. rit. lit. 'the village of the chairs' (see also *olng'esher*).
enkang' oo nkiri	n. rit. lit. 'the village of the meat'.
enkanyit	n. respect.
enkaputani (pl. *inkaputak*)	n. female affine.
enkashe (pl. *inkasho*)	n. heifer.
EnkAshumpai (pl. *InkAshumpa*)	n. female European.
enkayioni (pl. *inkayiok*)	n. young boy.
enkerai (pl. *inkera*)	n. lcs. child.
enkiba (pl. *inkiban*)	n. hate, hatred.
enkiguena (pl. *inkiguenat*)	n. meeting (usually between elders).
enkima	n. fire.
enkipaata (pl. *inkipaat*)	n. boys' dance and ritual performed at various stages during the formation of a new age-set.
enkiteng' (pl. *inkishu*)	n. cow; pl. cattle.
enkitok (pl. *inkituaak*)	n. married woman with children.
Enkitok ai	t-a/r. My wife.

WORD	MEANING
enkiyama	n. marriage ceremony, 'wedding'.
Enkiyu!	t-a. Brisket fat! (Jacobs 1965: 286; Spencer 1988: 264).
enkopia (pl. *inkopian*)	n. hat.
enkurma (pl. *inkurman*)	n. fenced area for cultivation, flour.
Enole ...	(?) t-r. Wife (of) son (of) .... Not commonly used.
entasat (pl. *intasati*)	n. lcs. old woman.
entawuo (pl. *intawua*)	n. heifer.
Entawuo!	t-a. Heifer! (see Episode 14).
entito (pl. *intoyie*)	n. lcs. girl.
entito e nkang'	n. lit. 'girl of the village', an unmarried girl who is kept at home to produce offspring in the name of her father.
Entito ai	t-a/r. My daughter.
entomononi (pl. *intomonok*)	n. lcs. married woman with children.
entore (pl. *intoren*)	n. beaded belt worn by moran.
eokoto e kule	n. rit. lit. 'the drinking of milk'.
esiankiki (pl. *isiankikin*)	n. lcs. young married woman.
erruat kiti	n. lit. 'the small bed', often referred to as 'the husband's bed' in the literature.
erruat sapuk	n. lit. 'the big bed', often referred to as 'the wife's bed' in the literature.
esile (pl. *isilen*)	n. debt.
esipolioi (pl. *isipolio*)	n. female initiate (Tucker & Ole Mpaayei 1955: 276).
esurutiai (pl. *isurutia*)	n. brass, coiled earrings.
eunoto	n. rit. lit. 'the planting'.
IlDalalekutuk	n. Maasai section located in Kajiado District, Kenya.
IlDamat	n. Maasai section located mainly in Narok District, Kenya.
IlDeregaiyani	n. age-set whose *enkang' oo lorikan* ceremony was performed in 1977. Also called *Seuri*.

WORD	MEANING
IlKaputiei	n. Maasai section living in Kajiado District, Kenya.
IlKeekonkop	n. age-group whose *enkipaata* ceremony was held in 1981.
IlKeekonyokie	n. Maasai section located in Ngong area of Kenya.
IlKiseeya	n. age-group whose *eunoto* ceremony was performed in 1974.
IlKisonko	n. section of the Maasai living in Tanzania.
IlMatapato	n. Maasai section located in Kajiado District of Kenya.
IlNyang'gusi	n. age-set whose *enkang' oo lorikan* ceremony was performed circa 1961. Pronounced as *IlNyankusi* in other areas of Maasailand.
IlOitai	n. section of the Maasai located in the Loita Hills of Kenya and Tanzania.
IlOodokilani	n. Maasai section living to the east of *IlOitai*.
IlPurko	n. Maasai section located to the north and west of *IlOitai*.
IlTareto	n. age-set whose *enkang' oo lorikan* ceremony was performed circa 1930.
IlTerito	n. age-set whose *enkang' oo lorikan* ceremony was performed circa 1950.
ilmeij enkima	n. rit. lit. 'the delegation which will not sit by the fire' (Galaty and Lembuyia 1984: 51).
inkamulak oo nkituaak	n. rit. female fertility blessing.
inkishu (pl.)	n. cattle (see *enkiteng'*).
intare (pl.)	n. mixed herd of sheep and goats.
Ipa!	part of greeting between men (see Episode 14).
IRaantai	n. age-group whose *eunoto* ceremony was performed in 1980.
keri (pl.*kerin*)	adj. spotted.

WORD	MEANING
king'ar olkina	lit. 'we share the breast' meaning children of the same mother.
Koko	n. grandmother.
Koko ...	t-a/r. Grandmother (of) ...
kutuk-aji	n. "foyer" of house, lit. 'mouth-house'.
Lo ayioni!	t-a. O boy!
Lo murrani!	t-a. O moran! (see Episodes 11 and 12).
Lo payian!	t-a. O elder!
Maendeleo ya Wanawake	Sw. Women's Movement.
Menye ...	t-a/r. Father (of) ...
Naito!	t-a. O girl!
Na kera!	t-a. O children!
Na kerai!	t-a. O child!
Na siankikin!	t-a. O married women!
Ng'oto ...	t-a/r. Mother (of) ...
Nkakuyiaa	n. grandfather.
olaibartani (pl. *ilaibartak*)	n. lcs. male initiate.
olaiguenani (pl. *ilaiguenak*)	n. age-set spokesman.
olalashe (pl. *ilalashera*)	n. brother.
olale (pl. *ilaleta*)	n. calf pen.
olamal (pl. *ilamala*)	n. delegation.
olamal loo layiok	n. rit. lit. 'the deputation of the boys'.
olamayio	n. lion hunt.
olameyu (pl. *ilameyitin*)	n. dry season, drought, famine.
olameyu sapuk	lit. 'the big drought'.
Olang'ata lai	t-a/r. My lover.
olaputani (pl. *ilaputak*)	n. male affine.
olari (pl. *ilarin*)	n. rainy season, heavy rain.

WORD	MEANING
OlAshumpai (pl. *IlAshumpa*)	n. male European, male wearing European clothes.
olayioni (pl. *ilayiok*)	n. lcs. boy.
Olayioni lai	t-a/r. My son.
olbarnoti (pl. *ilbarnot*)	n. shaved male.
olcekut (pl. *ilcekuti*)	n. herder.
Olchore lai	t-a/r. My friend.
oldeket (pl. *ildeketa*)	n. ritual curse (Jacobs 1965: 348).
oldimigomi (pl. *ildimigom*)	n. pt. *Pappea capensis*.
oldiret (pl. *ildireta*)	n. packing frame for donkeys, also used as a door.
Ole ...	t-a/r. Son (of) ...
olee (pl. *ilewa*)	n. man, male.
O le le!	part of greeting between men (see Episode 14).
Ol(e) ole ...	t-r. Son (of) son (of) ...
olgilata (pl. *ilgilat*)	n. clan.
olkatar (pl. *ilkatari*)	n. beaded armlet.
olkerai (pl. *ilkera*)	n. male child.
olkikau	n. first born son (Mol n.d.: 133).
olkiloriti (pl. *ilkilorit*)	n. pt. *Acacia xanthophloea*.
olkishoroto	n. rit. ritual beating.
olkiteng' (pl. *ilmong'i*)	n. ox.
olkiteng' loo lbaa	n. rit. lit. 'the ox of the wounds'.
olkukuri (pl. *ilkukurto*)	n. calabash.
olkumpau (pl. *ilkumpaun*)	n. tobacco.
olkunoni (pl. *ilkunono*)	n. blacksmith.
olmarisian (pl. *ilmarisiani*)	n. cowry-shell headband worn by newly-circumcised girls.
olmasaa (pl. *ilmasaa*)	n. flat, beaded necklace worn by females.
olmisigiyioi (pl. *ilmisigiyio*)	n. pt. *Rhus natalensis*.
olmorijoi (pl. *ilmorijo*)	n. pt. *Acokanthera schimperi*; senior warrior (Tucker & Ole Mpaayei 1955: 265).

WORD	MEANING
olmoruo (pl. *ilmoruak*)	n. married man.
olmumai (pl. *ilmuma*)	n. ritual oath - form of sanction (Jacobs 1965: 348).
olmurrani (pl. *ilmurran*)	n. lcs. moran, warrior.
olng'esher	n. rit. lit. 'the barbecue rack'; same ceremony as *enkang' oo lorikan* of *IlOitai*.
oloboruenkeene	n. deputy ritual leader, lit. 'the one of the cut calf strap'.
oloiboni (pl. *iloibonok*)	n. ritual expert, member of *olookidong'i* sub-clan.
oloiboni (pl. *iloibok*)	n. pt. *Erythrina abyssinica*.
oloing'ate (pl. *iloing'at*)	n. wind break.
oloing'oni (pl. *iloing'ok*)	n. leader of war party, lit. 'the bull'.
oloirien (pl. *ilorienito*)	n. pt. *Olea africana*.
oloonkidong'i	n. sub-clan of Maasai who are ritual experts.
oloshoro	n. maize meal porridge.
olotuno	n. ritual leader, lit. 'the one who is planted upright'.
olpayian (pl. *ilpayiani*)	n. lcs. married man.
Olpayian lai	t-a/r. My husband.
Olpiroi!	t-a. Firestick! (Jacobs 1965: 283).
olpiron (pl. *ilpironi*)	n. firestick, firestick elder.
olpopong'i (pl. *ilpopong'*)	n. pt. *Euphorbia ingens*.
olpul (pl. *ilpuli*)	n. meat-feasting site in the bush.
olpurda	n. rit. drinking of fat by women.
oltasat (pl. *iltasati*)	n. lcs. old man.
oltiren	n. central area in house (not commonly used in *IlOitai*).
oltomononi	n. an elder who plays a significant role in a ritual (Spencer 1988: 49, fn. 2).s
oltureshi (pl. *ilturesh*)	n. red bead (Hollis 1905: 323).
orinka (pl. *irinkan*)	n. wooden club.
oruai (pl. *iruaa*)	n. pt. *Acacia drepanolobium*.
osina (pl. *isinaitin*)	n. anguish, grief, sadness, sorrow.

WORD	MEANING
osindani	n. father's sister's husband (Mol. n.d.: 133).
osinkira (pl. *isinkiran*)	n. hut built in *emanyata* at *eunoto*.
osipolioi (pl. *isipolio*)	n. male initiate (Tucker & Ole Mpaayei 1955: 276).
osotua (pl. *isotuetin*)	n. friend, stock associate, umbilical cord.
Paker!	t-a. The one of the sheep!
Papa	n. father.
Pashe!	t-a. The one of the calf!
Pasile!	t-a. The one of the debt!
Patureshi!	t-a. The one of the red bead! (Hollis 1905: 323).
Seuri	n. final name of age-set of *IlDeregaiyani*.
sidai (pl. *sidan*)	adj. good, nice, beautiful.
sogo	n. fines - form of sanction (Jacobs 1965: 348).
Supa!	part of greeting between men (see Episode 14).
Tabala!	imp. Leave it alone!
tasat (pl. *tasati*)	adj. old (of person).
torrono (pl. *torrok*)	adj. bad.
ughali	n. Sw. stiff maize meal "porridge".
Yieyio	n. mother.

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