important and urgent for some young people. While the older generation still sees cohabitation as something scandalous, and marriage in terms of duties and obligations, the younger generation emphasizes freedom of choice.

In her study on the negative effects of cohabitation, which is reported in the *University of Chicago Chronicle*, Linda Waite found that these tentative relationships are bound together by what she calls "the cohabitation deal" rather than "the marriage bargain" (William Harms, 2000:1). In contemporary South Africa, for example, the increase in cohabitation is influenced by changing attitudes towards marriage among the younger generation and the concomitant decline in marriage rates (Denis, 2006).

A survey conducted in South Africa in 2005 revealed that there are definite intergenerational differences in attitudes towards marriage with people aged 50 and above showing more positive attitudes towards marriage than young adults who prefer or tolerate *personal choices, alternative views* and *living arrangements* (Amoateng, 2006). For example, many young blacks and coloureds in South Africa today view marriage just as one of the many options in social relationships rather than the norm as it is generally perceived by the older generation. These changes in attitudes towards marriage in South Africa are as much a matter of social class as they are racial, ethnic and age-specific. A lot of young people in Africa and elsewhere are now delaying marriage until they are reasonably economically-secure and able to meet the high cost of bride-wealth, and to support a family.

According to a study on street children in Nairobi (Suda, 1994; 1997), 42% of the surveyed mothers living in the slums of Nairobi pointed out that because of the increasing instability in modern marriages, many young men and women are now delaying marriages but living together and having children "until they know each other better". Some of these relationships may last only a few months before they break up, while others take several years before they are eventually formalized. The study also showed that many couples who cohabit tend to regard a formal marriage as a severe restriction of personal liberty. About 40% of the single mothers

between the ages of 20-35 who were interviewed also felt that marriage "spoils" a relationship and gives the man too much power and control over the woman. The Chronicle reports that Waite's study on the negative effects of cohabitation found two types of cohabitation:

> those in which the partners intend to marry and those in which they do not. Partners who cohabit with the intention of marrying share many of the characteristics of married people ...... Those who cohabit without the intention of marrying often have short relationships with few benefits (Harms, 2000:2-3).

Some cohabiting couples who intend to marry usually do so in order to "test" their compatibility before they make a formal commitment. In such cases, cohabitation may not necessarily be viewed as an *alternative* to marriage but rather as a *stage* that precedes marriage.

As has already been noted, cohabiting relationships do not always end in marriage, due to lack of commitment. This is because some men feel that they cannot marry a person they "know too well" and, therefore, when they become tired of the woman, they abandon her and look for another woman to marry. Some men cohabit with women out of "sympathy", particularly when the woman does not have anyone to support her. Others live together for a while and after realizing that they do not love the woman, they abandon her since there is no marriage bond. Given that the couple is not bound together as husband and wife, such relationships are often unstable with frequent breakups, as the couple does not feel obliged to address any problem that may affect the relationship. Thus, they separate when conflicts arise only to reunite after some time. In such cases, their lives become a series of separations and reunions, with new relationships being formed in-between the period of separations. Finally, due to the unstable nature of such relationships cohabiting partners cannot make long-term plans such as investments for the future, due to fear that they may separate. The draft Marriage Bill 2007 proposes that couples who have lived together for two years should be *presumed* married. The Church, which supports the presumption of marriage after two years of

cohabitation, feels that the law should not cheapen marriage by making it look like a revolving door where one casually moves in and out.

3.10 The Impact of Cohabitation on the Couple and Children

The effect of cohabitation tends to be mediated by the length of time a couple spent sharing a residence and the cohabitation-experience. The longer the time spent in cohabitation, the greater the impact if the experience was unpleasant (Manning, 1995; Bumpass and Sweet, 1989). Living arrangements in which couples do not intend to get married have been criticized for adversely affecting the emotional, social, financial and sometimes physical well-being of the couples and the children. One of the most disturbing aspects of cohabitation is its impact on the welfare and future life of the children born to a couple living together with no intention of marrying. Some of the issues often raised with respect to children of cohabiting parents are: the children's identity, their custody when the couples cease to live together, and the couples' obligations to them. One of the female students at the University of Nairobi whom I interviewed about the impact of cohabitation on children had this to say:

> The problem with cohabitation is that, in most cases, the women are abandoned with their children. These children are then brought up by a single mother, or she may decide to marry another man who may abuse her children. Such children may run away from home because of abuse, neglect and frustration, and go to work in the streets, or as domestic child labourers.

The reason for this concern about cohabitation is that even when the biological parents of the children are known, the social-parenting roles of a cohabiting couple towards children of the other partner may not be very well defined. For example, in her study on the negative effects of cohabitation, Waite notes that, in some cases:

> The non-parent partner, who is a man in the majority of cases, has no explicit legal, financial, supervisory or

custodial rights or responsibilities regarding the children of his partner (Harms, 2000:2).

She also points out that this ambiguity in the definition of the parenting roles of the cohabiting partners, and the lack of a legal framework to enforce children's rights, make cohabitation an unstable living arrangement which is harmful to children if it undermines their ability to access care, protection and livelihood. During my informal interviews with ten randomly-selected married and unmarried men and women between the ages of 28-35 in Nairobi, it was reported that men prefer cohabitation over formal marriage because they are not obliged to assume responsibilities that are required of a man in a formal marriage. One of the male interviewees who is a postgraduate student at the University of Nairobi said that under cohabitation, the man is "as free as a bird". Since there is no marriage bond, the man is under no obligation to provide for his partner's needs including the children's.

The confusion and ambiguity are, however, not only restricted to the obligations of the parents and children in the context of cohabitation, but they also affect the reciprocal role-expectations, and mutual obligations between the cohabiting parents themselves. Although Robertson (1981: 369) argues that cohabitation shares some of the characteristics with marriage, in terms of the degree of the couple's affection for, and commitment to, one another, Waite's study has shown that the cohabitation deal does not always deliver the same benefits as marriage, primarily because there is significant difference between "being married" and "living together". Waite also notes that people who cohabit often argue that marriage is just about a piece of paper (Harms, 2000:1) reflecting the view that the legal status of the relationship is less important than real commitment and loyalty which couples have for each other.

Whatever the justification for cohabitation, Waite's and other studies have identified several disadvantages of this type of "trial marriage". Firstly, cohabiting women tend to experience more verbal and physical abuse than their married counterparts. Secondly, cohabiting couples are more likely than those in formal marriages to have secondary sex partners, despite the expectations

of sexual exclusivity. Thirdly, parenting roles of cohabiting partners tend to be less clearly defined, particularly with regard to the biological children of the other partner. But even with their own biological children, there are issues of child-support, care, protection, custody and property rights which present a challenge when cohabitation comes to an end. Fourth, cohabiting couples tend to be financially more disadvantaged than married couples, partly because they do not benefit from the economic infrastructure which is developed within the institutional framework of a formal marriage. And finally, people in cohabiting relationships tend to lead relatively separate lives, reflecting the tentative, uncommitted and partially unsupportive nature of this type of living arrangement. Muchoki's study (2004: 52) among the University of Nairobi students identified several challenges which are experienced by students who are cohabiting in the men's halls of residence. According to this study, the major problems include: (a) financial difficulties; (b) poor academic performance due mainly to poor concentration and inadequate preparation; (c) lack of privacy particularly due to limited space in the halls (if the room-mate is not sent on "exile" as a show of comradeship); (d) heavy workload for the female partner who plays the traditional role of a wife, and combines it with her academic work, (e) emotional trauma suffered mainly by the female partner when the relationship breaks up; (f) regular unprotected sex, and the risk of STIs including HIV/AIDS infection and unwanted pregnancies.

With regards to the risk of HIV/AIDS and unplanned pregnancies, some students argue that the availability of easy-to-use, effective and inexpensive contraceptives has made cohabitation a much more acceptable and relatively risk-free lifestyle, among young adults. Muchoki also notes that there is a significant social cost associated with cohabitation in the student halls of residence. The main one is that students who are opposed to cohabitation tend to have low opinion of their cohabiting colleagues, and try to avoid them. In such situations, feelings of isolation, loneliness and loss of personal dignity and self-esteem become all too common on the part of the cohabiting couples.

4. FORMAL MONOGAMY AND INFORMAL POLYGYNY IN PARALLEL: THE MISTRESS PHENOMENON

Although much of the ethnographic literature indicates that heterosexual monogamy remains the statistical marriage norm, polygyny was nevertheless empirically widespread in traditional Africa and is increasingly being re-invented, often clandestinely, mainly to suit modern urban lifestyles. Wikipedia describes a *mistress* as a woman who often "provides companionship and sex to a man and demands a lavish lifestyle as well as cash in return" (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mistress). Keeping a mistress is an old practice that goes back in history and is, like marriage, a cultural universal and a social construct. In most cases, this social behaviour was and still is clandestine but could be acceptable or understandable, depending on the context and circumstances.

Some outside wives are divorced women who may have been abused and neglected by their former husbands and are, therefore, happy to be enjoying the affection and attention of other women's husbands. Such women tend to believe that the new relationships can restore their dignity and help them regain self-confidence. In many African marriages, when a man has an extramarital relationship, his wife or wives may begin to feel guilty and inadequate, wondering whether his infidelity has something to do with her inadequacy or something wrong she has done. In a classic case of moral posturing, 'inside wives' always perceive 'outside wives' as 'bad' women who wreck other women's homes. But some mistresses who have been married before tend to respond to this charge by making the argument that their own marriages were also ruined by other women.

There are several reasons for the prevalence of the mistress phenomenon and extra-marital relationships. For a deeper ethnographic understanding of the factors contributing to marital infidelity, I held informal contemporaneous discussions with twenty-six randomly selected, married and single men and women between the ages of 25 and 60 who are in different professions, and

live and work in Nairobi. The informal discussions were held with twelve women and fourteen men at different times between March and June 2007. The following section is based on the information obtained from the informal discussions.

4.1 Some Factors Contributing to the Mistress-Pattern

The mistress phenomenon and extra-marital relationships are not the product of a single factor. They are a product of multiple forces. The mistress phenomenon is largely a consequence of deteriorating economic conditions, and rising cost of living that has made the plurality of wives an expensive economic proposition. Most men can hardly afford more than one wife, and many modern African women are not interested in sharing a husband, at least not formally, particularly because of their growing desire for companionship and quality-time with their partners. The informal discussions identified several factors which contribute to extra-marital relationships, and offered useful insights into the mistress phenomenon. According to the informal discussions, the factors include lack of sexual fulfillment in marriage, domestic violence, peer pressure and poverty, all of which were mentioned by everyone in the sample. Other factors are lack of communication between spouses, revenge, the mid-life crisis, media influence, female circumcision, childlessness (or sonlessness), poverty and wealth. Some of these factors are gender specific while others are gender-neutral. This section presents some of the views from the informal discussions on the twin issues of mistresses and extra-marital relationships, and on some of the factors associated with the phenomenon.

a)   *In Search of Reassurance, Affection and Attention*

In his article in the *Sunday Nation* entitled *Infidelity: Why it is so tempting*, Chris Hart, a psychologist, argues that one of the most compelling reasons for extra-marital affairs is reassurance. He explains:

> We spend most of our adult lives feeling scared of getting old. So being reassured that we are still nice enough to

A uniquely human desire for love and appreciation often leads to the search for someone who will make us feel good about ourselves; someone who will provide the security, status or wealth which we think we need but lack, and someone we think will make us complete by restoring our sense of self-worth. Virtually everyone in the informal discussions sample identified good communication, deep commitment, affection, attention, companionship and a sense of emotional, social and economic security as some of the key pillars of a stable marriage in a contemporary setting. They point out, for example, that domestic violence of whatever nature, and lack of affection, attention and appreciation often lead to estrangement in a relationship, and lead a spouse to look for "happiness" outside marriage. Sometimes they find it but, quite often, they don't. In terms of communication, a 26-year-old married female University graduate said, "sometimes the man just wants to talk, and his wife is nagging, but the mistress will listen to him and make him feel special". She adds that men prefer mistresses who are "single and a place where things are cool, quiet and cosy". Some men regard these women a prize, and, if they are young and beautiful, the men tend to boast about them. An educated girl who is single is highly valued and, men win them with a lot of money. For some older, married men, the mistress deal is all about prestige, and they feel that they can still attract young beautiful women.

These sentiments reinforce the general perception that a mistress provides the services the man does not always get from his official wife (wives). They are also consistent with the point of view (often male) that keeping a mistress is less stressful because there is peace in the mistresses' abode as she gives the man full and special attention. A 60-year-old polygynous businessman in Nairobi regretted that "sometimes you cannot laugh when you are in your house because you are constantly reminded of school fees and other outstanding obligations and responsibilities. So from the time a man eats his supper to the time he goes to bed, he is usually in no mood for anything intimate."

b)   *Lack of Sexual Fulfillment*

Lack of sexual fulfillment and happiness between married couples are common causes of extra-marital affairs. Sexual dissatisfaction in marriage may arise from a boring sex life, or infrequent coitus both of which could be attributed to estrangement, sexual inexperience, old age, pregnancy, childbirth, or female circumcision. The media which exposes people to new and innovative ways of managing relationships, is also a key factor. For example, information on 'how to cheat on your husband or wife' is now available in the Internet. To illustrate the extent of media influence, a 39-year-old married man who runs a hotel business in Nairobi said that 'what a man can do with a mistress, he cannot do with his wife. A man is usually gentle with his wife but tries different styles with a mistress and it is more fun'. This indicates that sexual adventures are more likely to be pursued outside rather than within marriage, reflecting an old-fashioned but unpopular view that coitus within marriage is mainly for procreation rather than recreation.

c)   *The Mid-Life Crisis*

Field reports indicate that the mid-life crisis usually sets in between the ages of 35-50 in most marriages. Given the fact that most men are older than their wives, they experience it first. This period is usually characterized by significant reductions in marital satisfaction. Although some married couples escape this stage, psychological studies have shown that the majority experience a decline in marital satisfaction due to the combined effects of normal rebound, emotional erosion and motivational erosion. The normal rebound effect is felt when the relationship matures and things 'return to normal' after the excitement of falling in love and getting married. The emotional erosion occurs when couples settle down and begin to deal with the realities of marriage which include chores, responsibilities, arguments and conflict. Couples who deal poorly with these realities or cannot handle conflict in a relationship tend to experience marital dissatisfaction at this stage. Sociologists often argue that, in relationships, things look good from a distance

but there is always some mess up close. Loss of motivation, on the other hand, is associated with lack of spousal support. This occurs when spouses no longer share a common vision and mission in their marital life or when they no longer support one another in their personal goals (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mistress

A 33-year-old female marriage counselor in Nairobi explains that the mid-life is the period when most couples become dissatisfied with their relationships and sex life becomes routine. Some men feel that their wives are not doing what they used to do when they first got married and, therefore, begin to look for younger women. Some marriages do break at this point partly because many women today are empowered and have little tolerance for marital infidelity. The level of intolerance has risen with the threat of HIV/AIDS. Some women who find themselves in such situations may decide to move out and move on with their lives, or stay and revenge.

d)   *Revenge*

Revenge is both a cause and a consequence of extra-marital affairs. Everyone in the sample agreed that they would revenge if they discovered that their partners were cheating on them. All of them consider revenge as an effective coping mechanism without which the pressure and pain of betrayal would be too much to bear.

e)   *Peer pressure*

Peer influence also contributes to the establishment of extramarital relationships. It applies equally to men and women, particularly when they have a large network of friends, or are affiliated to a group. A 26-year-old female postgraduate student at the University of Nairobi notes that `when marriage becomes boring, a man returns to his friends and discovers that they have girlfriends. Since he does not want to lose his friends, he gets a mistress in order to belong`. She adds that such a man cannot go out with his wife to meet his friends because she might tell his friend's wives that they are having girlfriends. Typically, the men's ages normally range between 35 -50 years while the girls tend to be in their 20s.

4.2 Changing Patterns of Extra-Marital Relationship

a)   *Extra-marital Relationships Rarely Lead to Marriage*

Changing patterns of marital infidelity are part of the reason many mistresses remain unmarried. A 28-year-old male post-graduate student at the University of Nairobi reported that, unlike the past when a woman could get pregnant and put pressure on a man to marry her as a second wife, many women have now realized that few men are willing to leave their wives and marry their mistresses. Instead, the man will "keep" the mistress, pay her rent and remain with his wife. A lot of women with good education and who are able to support themselves now understand and actually do appreciate this trend, as something which is more liberating and good for their own freedom and self-actualization. Some women in this category are focused on their careers and don't consider marriage as a priority.

When I asked why extra-marital relationships rarely lead to marriage, a 39-year-old man who is married and runs a hotel business in Nairobi said that there are two reasons why men do not marry their mistresses. First, few men want to break their homes if they are legally monogamously married. Rather than remain in exclusive heterosexual monogamy, some men opt to practise polygyny informally. Secondly, there are two categories of women: the 'marriageable' and 'unmarriageable' type - which corresponds to a wife and a mistress respectively. He explains that unlike a wife who is a partner, a mistress is "a money taker and self-seeker. With a mistress, you have your pleasure and break it off". Another man who runs an estate business said that the reason why men do not marry their mistresses is because "the official wife does not want another wife in the home so men do it outside and not inside". Our discussions further revealed that men could distinguish between a "wife and girlfriend material". Some of the people I spoke to during the informal discussions offered some general stereotypes of how a wife and a girlfriend are expected to behave. They were contrasted as follows:

61

> A wife does not have time to follow football and discuss it with her husband. A girlfriend or a mistress is fun-loving and has all the time to follow football and discuss it with the boyfriend. A girlfriend therefore plays a very different role from that of a wife.

On the basis of this stereotype about the wife-mistress role-differentiation, some men have come to the conclusion that marrying a woman who is "girlfriend material" is not good for family stability.

It also emerged from our informal discussions that the girls themselves do not wish to be married. Part of the explanation is that many girls engage in relationships with married men when it is not the right time for them to get married. For instance, some may wish to complete their studies and secure a job before getting married. It is therefore common for friends with no long-term commitments to have very clear expectations. But even when the man is not looking for children and the woman is not looking for a future husband, extra-marital relationships are usually kept as a secret from the official wife (or wives). Social stigma and the risk of breaking the man's marriage are among the reasons for the secrecy. This discreet and non-committal nature of extra-marital relationships is therefore not accidental but a deliberate choice on the part of both parties, and when the mistress eventually decides to get married, she informs the man who understands and lets her move on. In some cases, the mistress does not want to get married at all, because this will make her assume the roles and responsibilities of a wife. However, men occasionally marry their mistresses, although, as the late Sir James Goldsmith once said when he married his mistress "when a man marries his mistress, he creates a vacancy" for another mistress to be recruited. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mistress).

b) *Role Reversal in Inter-generational extra-marital Relationships*

A 26-year-old female postgraduate student at the University of Nairobi reports that some young women prefer older and wealthier, married men (commonly known as "sugar daddies") to younger

boy-friends. Poverty drives many young women and men into extra-marital relationships primarily for economic gain. Young women date older and wealthy married men because they are seeking financial support. Commenting on the emerging trend of extra-marital affairs in Kenya today, a 35-year-old female banker notes that "mistresses are about money and fun. There is no love. Many of them sell to the highest bidder and if they get someone who gives more money and can support them better they leave. Moreover, many women do not want to get married nowadays. Thus, they can end the relationship conveniently when they are ready to get married. All they want is to get a baby with a man and move on". Very often, the man pays her rent, sets her up in business, takes her for holidays and lavishes her with expensive gifts regardless of how much she earns.

For many girls, the other reason is flexibility. The postgraduate student further clarified that "dating an older married man is more convenient for the girls as it gives them more space and financial support to focus on their studies and careers, and time to hang out with their friends". Unlike dating a young boyfriend, dating an older, married man is also convenient for girls because it is not geared towards marriage. Girls also like it because it gives them more opportunity to control their own schedule, including when to meet the old men. It was reported that girls do not get this opportunity when they are in a relationship with young single men who want attention and also tend to monitor their movements from time to time.

Apart from the more common "sugar daddy" syndrome, there is a growing increase in the number of relationships between older and wealthy women (commonly referred to as" sugar-mummies") and young men who are doing it mainly for money. Such women can choose either to go with rich elderly men who are about their age, and can provide them with most of the luxuries they want but do not have to pay for, or, "keep" a young man and pay for his services.

My informal discussions with a cross-section of married and unmarried male and female professionals in Nairobi revealed that

there are a number of young men between the ages of 25-35 years, including those with families, who are "kept" by rich women some of whom are old enough to be their own mothers. A 34-year-old male computer engineer in Nairobi told me: "nowadays young men look for older women who can take care of their financial needs. He continued, "when you are dating a young girl who is about your age, both of you may not have enough money but she might still expect you to buy things for her and sometimes this can be very frustrating. A sugar-mummy is better because she is less demanding and more generous". Like the young girls, the young men are also in it for money. Very often, the young men get money from sugar-mummies to spend on their girlfriends.

Reports from the informal discussions further indicate that some older women prefer younger men because they are "easier to control and more obliging than the women's own male contemporaries". However, most young men who are involved with sugar mummies are well aware of society's general disapproval of this behavior pattern. This is partly the reason they tend to go for the "super rich" to make it worth the risk, thereby subscribing to the old adage that 'if you want to eat a frog, eat a fat one'.

This role-reversal is a new phenomenon in inter-generational relationships. In a traditional African setting, it was generally socially unacceptable for a younger man to date or marry an older woman. In fact, to do so was a taboo because the morals were more puritanical then than they are today. Although sugar-mummies rarely marry their young boyfriends, the practice of "keeping" them is becoming more common as the *urban cultures* continue to condone, tolerate or even ignore these types of relationships, in the context of increasing individualism and enhanced sensibilities in the sphere of personal liberties.

c) *Multiple Partnerships and Expedited Cheating*

In the past, married men would begin to cheat on their wives after about five years of marriage, or longer, but now they start cheating after only six months, or soon after the honeymoon. The reason for this is multiple partnerships. Some people have multiple partners up

to the time they are getting married, and continue to be in touch with the other partners even when they are on honeymoon. The seeds of extra-marital affairs are usually planted at this stage.

d)   *Emerging Market for Married Women*

The informal discussions further indicate that nowadays there are some married men who prefer dating married women. Much of the appeal for married women is derived from the expectation that both parties will not talk or brag about the relationship. Relationships between married people usually occur either because one or both of them are dissatisfied with their marriages but don't want to end them, and secondly, because both parties know that they have to be discreet about the affair. A 55-year-old businessman reported that "a married woman who attempts to destroy a man's marriage will also destroy her own marriage, so both of them must manage the extra-marital affair carefully.

The key point in this arrangement is the understanding that none of the parties expects marriage, and if the man gets to know that the woman is having problems with her husband, he would not like to keep her either. It was also reported that, in some cases, when the mistress becomes pregnant the man takes off, partly because it threatens his marriage since they had no intention of a long-term relationship and also because he is not sure that the child is his. Another explanation lies in the perception that a married woman is 'cheap' to run because her husband meets most of her financial needs. A common view is that men who date married women do not wish to incur expenses. But perhaps the most intriguing idea relates to the view that married women are generally 'safer' than young girls or single women because they tend to carry 'less risk of HIVAIDS infection'.

5.   CONCLUSION

This lecture has examined the ways in which various forces of change have acted conjointly to transform the traditional African family system and to produce many new marital patterns and family forms, some of which have not received social recognition and

cultural legitimacy but exist *in parallel with the conventional families*. In this constant and active state of flux, there are conflicting conceptions of marriage and family, and a general lack of consensus on acceptable moral and social standards of behaviour. The main reason for this is that, conventional marital relationships within the traditional African society were embedded in a certain system of moral and social obligations, and everyone was expected to submit to the social regulatory discipline within a culturally acceptable normative framework.

The processes of modernization, globalization, delocalization and mobility which are evident everywhere in Africa and, indeed, across the world have had far-reaching consequences for the twin institutions of marriage and the family. One of the consequences of this transition is the *weakening* of the extended family system, the *decline* of polygyny and the emergence of *alternative family options* which are designed to suit individual needs. Some of the new family arrangements are becoming increasingly more acceptable or more tolerated, or simply just ignored, depending on the context. Thus, the pattern that has emerged is that of *formal monogamy* often practised alongside delocalized, clandestine and *informal polygyny* involving "outside wives" and "outside children" who participate in a parallel programme and are usually condemned by the "inside wives" for messing up their lives.

While some of the changes in family structures discussed in this lecture have created new opportunities for some people to enjoy life and given them a great sense of optimism, in other respects they have had a distinctly negative impact, and have become a major source of frustration for some men, women and children. Although family disruption does not necessarily cause lasting harm to those affected, and may indeed, in some cases, enrich their lives, some of the deleterious effects of divorce, single-parenthood, cohabitation and clandestine polygyny have led to the general perception that the social ecology in Africa is being severely damaged by the systematic erosion of its fabrics, and that marriage is becoming an endangered institution. For instance, family disintegration under conditions of extreme poverty have had undesirable effects on the well-being of women and children, some of whom have turned to

street life in order to survive under some of the most difficult, deprived and deplorable circumstances in human experience. A more creative effort to help people cope with changing family traditions is to expand the range of social and economic opportunities, and increase their access to resources, as a sustainable solution to most of our social problems, including the deterioration in the well-being of women and children.

Despite the changes in family structures, increased family instability and the establishment of new family varieties, the family remains a *central institution* where women, men and children can acquire and develop life-giving skills in a sustainable way. Most of us attending this lecture today still remember and recognize the role of family structures in our upbringing and successes. Although culture is a vital issue in all family capacity-building initiatives, the challenge to sustain viable family institutions of any variety is not to go back to the past, but rather to recast the new social arrangements in a dynamic cultural environment that recognizes and celebrates diversity, reform and personal liberties. Therefore, any family formation that is blended out of some mixture ought to empower its members and give them the freedom to choose a lifestyle that suits their circumstances.

A more liberal, positive and pragmatic view of marriage and family life such as the one embodied in the current draft Kenyan Marriage Bill (2007) is an example of our recognition of *transition* in family traditions. Rather than remain firmly rooted in cultural traditions and committed to essentialism which is based on our limited vision of an ideal family form, it is important to recognize change and celebrate diversity. This recognition is crucial because, in a progressive social and cultural domain, a truly fulfilling family life remains that which is built around love, commitment, responsibility, partnership, fairness and social justice. My point of closure is that these are some of the broad goals which future family studies, and reform initiatives, should embrace, first, because they address the twin issues of family disruption and diversity, and secondly, for they help to consolidate some of the gains brought about by changing family traditions in Africa and elsewhere.

67

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Adams Bert N. and Jan Trost (2005). *Introduction* in Bert N. Adams and Jan Trost (Eds). **Handbook of World Families.** Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications, Inc pp.ix-xii.

Anne Muthanje and Collette A. Suda. *Gender Relations and the Utilization of Family Planning Services in Nyan'goma Division, Bondo District.* MILA. Vol. 5, pp. 29 – 41, 2003.

Agwanda, Alfred (2004). *Other Proximate Determinants of Fertility. Kenya Demographic and Health Survey 2003*. Central Bureau of Statistics, Nairobi, Kenya.

Acheampong Y. Amoateng (1991 & 2001). *The South African Family: Continuity or Changes.* Census and Survey Data. South Africa.

Amoateng, Yaw (2006). Marriage is giving way to cohabitation in South Africa. www.iol.co.za

Arendell, T. (1995). *Fathers and Divorce*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications.

Budlender Debbie, Ntebaleng Chobokoane and Sandile Simelane (June 2004). *Marriage Patterns in South Africa: Methodological and Substantive Issues. South African Journal of Demography*, Vol.9/1 pp.1-26

Bahemuka, (1992). *Social change and Women's Attitudes Towards Marriage in East Africa.* In: *The Will to Arise: Women, Tradition and the Church in Africa,* M.A. Oduyoye and M.R.A. Kanyoro (eds.), pp.119 – 134.

Bumpass, L and Sweet, J. (1989). Children's experience in single-parent-families: Implications of cohabitation and marital transitions. *Family Planning Perspectives*, 21, pp. 256 – 260.

CEDAW (2006). The 5th and 6th Combined Report of the Government of the Republic of Kenya on the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women.

Central Bureau of Statistics (2004). Kenya Demographic and Health Survey, Nairobi, Kenya.

Collette Suda, Mary Omosa and Philista Onyango (1999). *Socio-Cultural Factors Influencing Development in Nyanza Province. Kenya Journal of Sciences, Series C: Humanities and Social Sciences* 5 (1) pp. 66 – 75. **ISSN 0250-8265.**

Cohen, R. (1971). *Dominance and Defiance: A study of Marital Instability in an Islamic African Society.* Washington DC: *American Anthropological Association.*

Crytser, Ann (1990). *The Wife-in-law Trap.* New York: Simon and Schuster.

De Lancey, Virginia (1981) "Wage Earner and Mother: Compatibility of Roles on a Cameroon Plantation" in Helen Ware (ed). **Women, Education and Modernization of the Family in West Africa.** Changing African Family Project Series Monograph 7. Australian National University, Canberra, pp. 1-21.

Debbie Budlender, Ntebaleng Chobokoane and Sandile Simelane (2004). *Marriage Patterns in South Africa.* Methodological and Substantive Issues. *South African Journal of Demography.* Vol.9, No.1 (June) pp. 1 – 26.

Denis, Philippe (2006). *The Crisis of Marriage in Contemporary South Africa. Grace and Truth. A Journal of Catholic Reflection for Southern Africa.* Vol. 23. No. 1 (April) pp. 3 – 8.

DK(2006) *in Defense of Polygyny*
http://www.marginairevolution.com

Durazi, Seeb (2005). *Is Marriage Still Relevant? Daily Nation,* August 31, pp. 7.

Evans Pritchard, E.E (1951). **Kinship and Marriage among the Nuer.** Oxford University Press: Elly House, London.

Ezeh, Alex Chika (1997). Polygyny and Reproductive Behaviour in sub-Saharan Africa: A Contextual Analysis. **Demography,** Vol.34 No. 3 (August) pp. 355-368.

Folbre, Nancy (1988) "Patriarchal Social Transformation in Zimbabwe", in Sharon B. Stichter and Jane L. Parpart (eds.). **Patriarchy and Class: African Women in the Home and the Workforce.** London and Boulder: Westview Press pp. 61-80.

Gage-Brandon, J. Anastasia (1992). *The Polygyny-Divorce Relationship: A Case Study of Nigeria. Journal of Marriage and the Family,* Vol.54, No.2, (May), pp.285-292.

Garenne M. & van de Walle, E (1989). *Polygyny and Fertility among the Sereer of Senegal. Population Studies,* 43 pp. 267-283.

Harms William, 2000. Research Looks at Cohabitation's Negative Effects. *Chronicle* Vol. 19, No. 11, March 2.

Hart, Chris (2007) *Infidelity: Why it's so tempting. Sunday Nation,* December 17, 2006 pp: 4

Hastings, A. 1973. *Christian Marriage in Africa.* London: S.P.C.K.

http://www.marriageandfamilies.byu.edu/issues/2001/January cohabitation.htm.

http://www.wikipedia.org/wiki/cohabitation

Inez Adams (2007). *Black Women's Desires for "Traditional" Marriages.* Printed for Philip L. Kilbride.

Kalule, Henry (1987). *Family Life* in G.S. Were and Joshua Akong'a (eds) Machakos *District Socio-Cultural Profile*. Nairobi, Kenya. Ministry of Economic Planning and National Development and the Institute of African Studies, University of Nairobi, pp. 48 – 55.

Karanja wa Wambui (1987). *"Outside Wives and Inside Wives" in Nigeria*: A Study of Changing Perceptions in Marriage in David Parkin and David Nyamweya (ed.) **Transformations of African Marriage.** International African Institute, Manchester University Press, pp. 248 – 261.

Kayongo-Male, Diane and Philista Onyango (1984). *The Sociology of the African Family*. Longman: London.

Kearney, Thomas (1996). *Changing Family Arrangements in Nairobi*. Unpublished research paper. Maryknoll Institute of African Studies of St. Mary's University, Nairobi and Minnesota.

Kilbride Philip L. and Janet C. Kilbride (1997). *"Stigma, Role Overload and Delocalization among Contemporary Kenyan Women"* in Thomas S. Weisner, Candice Bradley and Philip L. Kilbride. (Eds). *African Families and the Crisis of Social Change*. Westport, Connecticut: Bergin & Garvey. pp. 208-223.

Kilbride Philip L. (1994). *Plural Marriage for Our Times: A Reinvented Option*? Bergin & Garvey, Westport, Connecticut.

Kilbride, Philip L. and Kilbride, Janet C. (1990). *Changing Family Life in East Africa: Women and Children at Risk*. The Pennsylvania State University Press: University Park.

Kisembo, Benezeri, Magesa, L. and Shorter, A. 1977. *African Christian Marriage*. London and Dublin: Geoffrey Chapman.

Langley, M.S (1979). *The Nandi of Kenya: Crisis Rituals in a period of Change*. UK: C. Hurst and Company Publishers.

Linda Stone (2004). *Introduction, Contemporary Directions in Kinship.* **Kinship and Family.**

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Talaq %28conflict%29

Little, Kenneth (1973). *African Women in Towns.* An Aspect of Africa's Social Revolution. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Lowe, N.V. and G. Douglas (1998). *Family Law.* London, Edinburgh, Dublin: Butterworths. Ninth Edition.

Mack, B.B. 1992. Harem Domesticity in Kano, Nigeria. In: *African Encounters with Domesticity,* K. Tranberg (ed.), pp. 75-79.

Manning, Wendy D. (1995). *Cohabitation, Marriage and Entry into Motherhood. Journal of Marriage and the Family.* Vol. 57, No. 1 pp. 191-200.

Mburugu, Edward K. and Bert N. Adams (2005). *Families in Kenya* in Bert N. Adams and Jan Trost (Ed.). *Handbook of World Families.* Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications pp. 3 – 24

Meekers, Dominique (1992). The *Process of Marriage in African Societies: A Multiple Indicator Approach. Population and Development Review, Vol. 18, No. 1 pp.61-78.*

Modo, Ogo Victor Innocent (2005). *Nigerian Families* in Bert N. Adams and Jan Trost (Ed.). *Handbook of World Families.* Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications pp. 25 – 46.

Muchoki, Samuel M. (2004). Students' Response to HIV/AIDS Pandemic: A Case Study of the University of Nairobi. B.A. Dissertation, Institute of African Studies, University of Nairobi.

Nagashima, Nobuhiro (1987) "Aspects of Change in Bridewealth Among the Iteso of Kenya" in David Parkin and David Nyamweya (ed.) **Transformations of African Marriage.** International African Institute, Manchester University Press, pp.183 – 198.

Nasimiyu-Wasike, A. 1992. *Child Abuse and Neglect*: An African Moral Question. In: *Moral and Ethical Issues in African Christianity: Exploratory Essays in Moral Theology,* J.N.K. Mugambi and A. Nasimiyu-Wasike (eds.), pp. 153-169.

Ndeti, K. (1972). *Elements of Akamba Life*. Nairobi, Kenya: East African Publishing House.

Ngubane, H. 1987. The Consequences for Women of Marriage Payments in a Society with Patrilineal Descent. In: *Transformations of African Marriage,* D. Parkin and D. Nyamwaya (eds.), pp. 173-182.

Obbo, C. 1987. *The Old and the New in East African Elite Marriages*. In: *Transformations of African Marriage,* D. Parkin and D. Nyamwaya (eds.), pp. 263-280.

Oboler Regina Smith (1980). *Is the female husband a man?* Woman-woman marriage among the Nandi of Kenya. *Ethnology* 19: 69-88.

Ocholla-Ayayo, ABC (1980). *The Luo Culture.* **A Reconstruction of the Material Cultural Patterns of a Traditional African Society**. Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag GMBH.

Okenye, Aboki Clement (1977). Recent Legal Developments in customary land succession and inheritance among the Gusii community of East Kitutu Location of Kisii District, Kenya. L.L.B dissertation, University of Nairobi.

Okullu, Henry (1990). *Church and Marriage in East Africa.* Nairobi: Uzima Press.

O'Leary, M.F. (1984). *The Kitui Akamba: Economic and Social Change in semi-arid Kenya.* Nairobi, Kenya: Heinemann Education Books.

Philip Kilbride, Collette Suda and Enos Njeru (2000). *Street Children in Kenya: Voices of Children in Search of a Childhood.* Westport, Connecticut: Bergin and Garvey.

Price, Neil (1996). *The Changing Value of Children among the Kikuyu of Central Province, Kenya.* Africa: Journal of the International African Institute, Vol. 66, and No.3 pp. 411-436.

Rennin Clignat (1970). *Many Wives, Many Powers*. Evanston North, Western University Press.

Republic of Kenya (2006). **Sessional Paper No. 2 of 2006 on Gender Equality and Development.** Ministry of Gender, Sports, Culture and Social Services. Government Printer, Nairobi.

Republic of Kenya (2007). *Economic Survey.* Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, Ministry of Planning and National Development.

Reriani, Peter G. (1987). Interaction of Western Christian Marriage with Kikuyu Customary Practices: A Case Study of Mathira Division. M.A. Thesis, University of Nairobi.

Robertson, Ian (1981). *Sociology* 2nd Edition; New York: Worth Publishers, Inc.

Ruel, M.J. (1959). The Social Organization of the Kuria: A Fieldwork Report. Institute of African Studies, University of Nairobi.

Shorter, Aylward and Edwin Onyancha (1999). *Street Children in Africa: A Nairobi Case Study*. Limuru: Pauline's Publications Africa, Kolbe Press.

Shorter, Aylward (1977). *Christian Family Power in Africa: An Abridgement of African Christian Marriage*. Spearhead No. 48 Nakuru: Nakuru Press.

Silberschmidt, Margarethe (1992). *Have Men Become the Weaker Sex*? Changing Life Situations in Kisii District, Kenya. *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 30(2): 237-253

Suda, Collette A. (2003). ***Traditional Mechanisms of Conflict Resolution in Isiolo District, Eastern Kenya: Implications for Rural Poverty***. International Journal of Contemporary Sociology. Volume 40 No. 2, October 2003, pp. 281 – 294.

Suda, Collette A. (2002). ***Gender Disparities in the Kenyan Labour Market: Implications for Poverty Reduction***. Nordic *Journal of African Studies*. Vol. 11:3, pp. 301 – 321. **ISSN 1235 – 4481**.

Suda, Collette A. (2001). ***The Invisible Child Worker in Kenya***: The Intersection of Poverty, Legislation and Culture. *Nordic Journal of African Studies*. Vol.10 No.2 pp.163 – 175.

Suda, Collette A. (2000). ***Change, Persistence and Development in Smallholder Livestock Production System in Western Kenya***. In R.A. Obudho and J.B. Ojwang (eds.) *Issues in Resource Management and Development in Kenya: Essays in Memory of Prof. Simeon H. Ominde*. Nairobi, pp. 234 – 244. **ISBN 9966 25 007 7.**

Suda, Collette A. (2000*). **Gender, Culture and Environmental Conservation in Western Kenya: Contextualizing community Participation and the Choice of Techniques**: Nordic *Journal of African Studies*: Vol.9 No. 1 pp. 31 – 48 A. **ISSN 1235-4481.**

Suda, Collette A. (1999). ***Culture and Gender in Kenya: The Conceptual Connection and the Agenda for Change*** Mila Vol.4, 1999, pp. 1 – 8.

Suda, Collette A. (1999). *African Family and Child Welfare: Tradition in Transition*. International Journal of Contemporary Sociology vol. 36 No.1 pp. 56 – 65.

Suda, Collette A (1997). *Fertility and the Status of Women in Kericho District: Reflections on some key Reproductive Issues.* Kenya Journal of Sciences, Series C: Social Sciences 4(1): 61-76). **ISSN 0250-8265.**

Suda, Collette A. (1997). *The Political Economy of Women's Work in Kenya: Chronic Constraints and Broken Barriers* in Parvin Ghorayshi and Claire Belanger (Eds) pp. 75 – 90. **ISBN: 0-313-29797.**

Suda, Collette A. (1997). *Gender Relations in Agricultural Production in Kenya: Insights from Laikipia District* in Ngware et al (eds.) Gender and Agrarian Change in Tanzania with a Kenyan Case Study. Dar es Salaam University Press pp 119 – 140.

Suda, Collette A. (1997). Street Children in Nairobi and the African Cultural Ideology of Kin-Based Support System: Change and Challenge. *Child Abuse Review.* Vol. 6, No.3 pp. 199 – 217. **ISSN 0952 – 9136.**

Suda, Collette A. (1996). Encountering of East African Traditions in *Folklore and the Encounters of Traditions* (ed) Paivikki Suojanen and Risto Raitilla. Kopi-Jyna or, Jyvaskylla pp. 71 – 80.

Suda, Collette A. (1996). *The Centrality of Women in the Moral Teachings in African Society. Nordic Journal of African Studies,* 5(2) pp. 71 – 83. **ISSN 1235-4481.**

Suda, Collette A. (1993). The Impact of Changing Family Structures on Nairobi Children. *African Study Monographs*, Vol.14 No.2 pp. 109 – 121.

Suda, Collette A. (1991). *Social, Cultural and Demographic Factors in Female Labour Force Participation in Kenya"* pp. 254 – 274 in ILO/Republic of Kenya. Population and Human Resource Development Planning in Kenya.

The Sunday Standard -Reuters *"Cameroon Legalizes Polygamy to Promote Family Values"* January 14, 2007 pp: 27

The Marriage Bill, 2007. Kenya Law Reform Commission.

Swatz, M.J. (undated) Family Size in Three East African Societies: East African Literature Bureau. Nairobi.

Vassar, Michael (2006). **In Defense of Polygyny**. http://www.marginalrevolution/2006/02/in_defense_of_p.html

Vaughan, P. (1989).The Monogamy Myth: A new Understanding of affairs and how to survive them. New York: Newmarket Press.

Wachege, P.N. (1994). African Single Mothers: Socio-Ethical and Religious Investigations. Signal Press, Nairobi.

Wallerstein, Judith S.; Julia M. Lewis, and Sandra Blakeslee (2000). ***The Unexpected Legacy of Divorce: The 25 Year Landmark Study.*** Hyperion.ISBN 0-7868-6394-3.

Waite, Linda J.; Don Browning, William J. Doherty, Maggie Gallagher, Ye Luo and Scott M. Stanley (2003). ***Does Divorce Make People Happy? Findings from a study of Unhappy Marriages.***

Waithaka, Esther (2005). ***When the Family Disintegrates***. Daily Nation, September 21, pp.6

Wandibba, Simiyu (1997). ***"Changing Roles in the Bukusu Family"*** in Thomas S. Weisner, Candice Bradley and Philip L. Kilbride. (Eds) in collaboration with A.B.C. Ocholla-Ayayo, Joshua Akong'a and Simiyu Wandibba. African Families and the Crisis of Social Change. Westport, Connecticut: Bergin & Garvey. Pp. 332-340.

Ware, Helen (1979). ***"Polygyny: Women's Views in a Transitional Society, Nigeria 1975".*** Journal of Marriage and Family 41, 186–189.

Weisner, Thomas et. al. (1997). *African Families and the Crisis of Social Change.* London: Bergin and Garvey.

Whitehead, B.D. (1993, April). *Dan Quayle was right.* The Atlantic Monthly, 271 (4), pp.47 – 84.

Whyte, S. (1980). Wives and Co-wives in Marachi, Kenya. Folk 21 – 22, pp. 134 – 146.

Ziehl, Susan C. (2005). *Families in South Africa* in Bert N. Adams and Jan Trost (Ed.). *Handbook of World Families.* Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications pp. 47 – 63.