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THE SOCIO-ECOJOMIC AND RITUAL HOLES
OF POKOT WOMEN

Dissertation submitted for the Degree of Ph.D.

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International Boundary: Kenya/Uganda

| Official Pokot Boundary within Kenya |
| Pokot area within Uganda |
| Wei Wei Location |
| Katuw Community |
| Concentration of Agricultural Pokot (unshaded areas - Pastoral Pokot) |
Chapter I. Introduction

The dm of this introduction is threefold: to introduce the topic of this thesis in reference to some of the current literature written on women and gender constructs; to introduce myself in relation to my choice of topic and methods of fieldwork; to introduce the Pokot and give a general background to the people and area. The introduction is kept short, and is simply meant to give some background information and raise the relevant issues which are discussed at length in the thesis.

A. The Topic and Related Literature

This thesis focuses on Pokot women in their socio-economic and ritual roles, and is an analysis of male/female relations and sexual identity amongst the Pokot of western Kenya. The thesis examines in detail the differing perspectives held by women and men; how and when these different perspectives are articulated or muted; and the extent to which each sex acknowledges and accepts the perspective of the other. The thesis is primarily based on data relating to the agricultural Pokot, but reference is occasionally made to pastoralist data in order to highlight some of the main points.

There has been a flood of anthropological literature on women in recent years (to name the editors of a few works which have influenced my own writing: S. Ardener (1977 end 1978); Caplan and Bujra (1978); Edholm, Harris and Young (1977); Lb Fontaine (1978); and Kosaldo and Lacphere (1970). Much of the early literature focused on the question of whether women are universally regarded as being the 'second sex' and 'oppressed' or dominated by men. Hare recently, the literature has focused on women in relation to men, and the definition of gender constructs. This current literature examines how gender marks as an operator in defining stereotypes and hierarchies based on the
 masculinel and feminine, and herm individuals in different societies identify with these constructs. It is within this framework, or set of ideas, that I examine my own material on Pokot women, paying particular attention to questions raised by E. Ardener (1977), Ortner (1974), and more recently, HscCormack and Strathern (1980).

In 1972 (reprinted 1977), Edwin Ardener presented a challenge to women anthropologists by claiming that most anthropological literature is male biased. Ardener described the bias as an analytical and technical problem stemming from the fact that, in most societies, men are more articulate than women. Therefore, the anthropologist is more likely to record the male or dominant model of that society. Conversely, we could describe some of the literature which grew out of the women's liberation movement, dealing particularly with feminist issues, as being female biased. The idea of bias has also been discussed in a more specific sense by M. Strathern (1979), who argues that our own cultural formulation of the nature: culture construct may colour our understanding of how other societies regard gender differences, particularly when the formulation symbolises a western idea which is rooted in the denigration of domesticity. Both these arguments are valid and should be recognized and taken into account. In studying Pokot women, I have attempted to be as honest to the ethnographic data as possible, and have also tried to avoid imposing a cultural bias onto the data.

However, it is easy to understand why the published material on Pokot leans towards a male bias; firstly, all the anthropologists who have published on the Pokot to date are male (the more well-known publications are: Eech 1911; Oonant 1965; Bdgerton and Conant 1944 and 1971; Peristiany 1951, 1954 and 1975; Schneider 1957 and 1959), and secondly, Pokot men definitely give the appearance that they are 'dominant', and it is Pokot men, rather than women, who continually emphasize their view and perspective of the world in public situations. For example, it is interesting that, although male and female initiation rites are equally elaborate ceremonies, there is hardly any reference
female initiation in the Pokot li^Aruturo. This cC i the core
liable oinoo r-cae of the beatfer.ormwork on Pokot is abcul
vitiation and the age-set system (Peristiany 1951). Similarly, it ia
Interesting that, although two-thirds of the Pokot population practices
oultivation as their primary mods of subsistence, almost all the literature on
the Pokot is about the remaining third of the population who practice
psstoralism as their primary mode of subsistence. As audi, I hope that ay own
work which focuses on women and female Initiation among the agricultural Pokot,
will help to create a more balanced body of literature on the Pokot people.
Finally, the thesis is also meant to make a contribution to the aaaaewhat
neglected topic of women In East Africa.
B. Choice of Topic and Fieldwork Method

Why an anthropologist chooses to discuss a particular aspect of a certain
culture is Important for methodological reasons. It is not arbitrary and has
to do with the conjunction of, an the one hand, the time and place of the
observer (especially as this affects hisAer particular disciplinary
development), and, on the other hand, the time and place of the situation
observed. As a consequence, certain aspects of a society will strike
individual observers as seemingly more Important than others. As a woman
anthropologist accepted into the women's realm, I came to identify with those
things which were of importance to Pokot women. I discovered that the
relationship between wives and husbands (especially women'a rights within this
relationship), women's control of their sexuality, and women's initiation, were
topics for continual discussion and emphasis amongst the women themselves.
Furthermore, I found that within the oontext of Pokot society as a whole,
Importance is placed on maturity and gender identity by both men and women, as
ia demonstrated in the ritual elaboration of their respective initiation rites.

I first went to the Pokot agricultural area in the Cherengani hills (some
350 miles fran Nairobi; in 1972. Bather untypically, I began doing fieldwcrk
Prior to my anthropological training. I was originally encouraged to go to
pokot by Dr L.S.B. Leakey, who asked me to make an indepth stuay of the Pokot ndt©rial oulture for the Nairobi National l&iseum. Vy interest and fascination with the Pokot people led me to explore various aspects of their culture, and, although Dr Leakey died shortly after I went to Pokot, I continued to stay in the area for over a year. During this year, I began to learn the Pokot language (helped by Pokot who spoke some English, having been educated in mission schools), and established comsunication and friendships with the people living in the Katuw region of the Wei Wei Location. Hy area of fieldwork was circumscribed and limited by the fact that I seldom had means of transport, because I was not funded by any large organisation. Ky introduction to Pokot society and culture was therefore on a personal rather than a scientific basis,

I returned to the area of Katuw in 1975 (to stay there a further four years), after completing the Certificate of Social Anthropology at Canbridge University. At Cambridge my original interest in Pokot women was enriched by the general anthropological interest and literature on the subject of women. With a better understanding of anthropology, I went baok to Pokot to put my original observations into a broader scientific framework. I was welcomed back, and re-established the friendships I had formed previously, particularly with the women of the Katuw connunity. It is of significance to this discussion that by this time the Pokot themselves recognised me as a 'woman'. When I originally went to Pokot, I was considered more 'male' than 'female'. Early in 1973, a Pokot elder, and special friend, suggested that in order to become a 'woman', I should marry Murray Eoberts (the man who took the photographs), by performing nosio; the last stage of the Pokot marriage ceremony. It was only after marriage that I was expected, by Pokot men and women alike, to participate fully in the daily activities of Pokot women, and allowed, by women, to participate in the secret and more private aspects of their everyday lives ani rituals.

By discovery that Pokot women are neither 'muted' (as suggested by E. Ardener (1977)) in their expression of ideas which may be of special concern
The organization of the two groups, is particularly in the area where the pastoralists and agriculturists border each other and there is everyday contact between the two groups.

Like many other East African groups, the Pokot idolize livestock, and especially cattle. This is not only true of the pastoral Pokot, but of the agriculturists as well, who keep small herds of goats, sheep, and oois. The agriculturists see the pastoralists' way of life as one of ease because they do not have to "bend over" and dig the soil, and also consider them as being far wealthier because of the large herds they own. On the other hand, the pastoralists regard the agricultural Pokot with respect on account of their occupying the ancestral homeland of the Pokot, and keeping up the essentially Pokot customs. The pastoralists come to the agricultural area in order to participate in certain annual rituals which are held there for all Pokot.

The Pokot speak a language closely related to Nandi, together with which it forms a language group within the larger Nilo-Maa group. Further linguistic research is necessary to establish whether or not this larger group can be considered a language family in its own right. Nilo-Kaa includes, besides Nandi-Pokot (also known as Kalenjin), Nilotic, Bari, Otuho, Karimojong-Turkana, Ongamo and !lzaa. Most of the neighbours of the Pokot speak languages belonging to this Nilo-!Iaa group, for example, Karimojemg, Turkana, Samburu (who speak !aa) and Sebei (whose language falls in the !lTandi-Pokot group).*

Several of the ethnic groups which surround Pokot have been studied and written about by social anthropologists. N. Dyson-Hudson has written on the Karimojong (1966); P.H. Gulliver on the Turkana (1955 and 1966); P. Spencer on the Samburu (1965 and 1973); and W. Goldsohmidt on the Sebei (1976). G.W.B. Huntingford made an ethnographic survey of the southern Nilo-Hamites (now referred to as southern Nilotes), which included the Pokot and their southern Neighbours (1953).

Several ethnic groups who live to the south of Pokot speak languages...
loosely related to Pokot, and also share a number of eoonanio and cultural
in ocBsnon with them (they Include Nandi, Kipsigis, Ogiek, Marakwet,
Geyo and Tugun). In the 1960s, the politicians in these groups decided they
should unite as a single political entity within Kenya and adopted the name of
Kalenjin (see Kesby 1977: 83).

The official administrative area of Pokot encompasses two separate
Districts, and these Districts are represented by Pokot who are elected as
Members of the Kenya Parliament. The two Districts within which the Pokot
area falls are: West Pokot District (which now includes the Kara Suk area,
formerly administered by Uganda, and now a division within the West Pckot
District); and to the east of this the Baringo District, only part of which
is occupied by Pokot. Each District has a District Commissioner as its
administrative head. The Districts are subdivided into Divisions, which are
governed by District Officers. Divisions are further divided into Locations,
headed by elected Chiefs who also have a number of elected sub-chiefs, who
govern snail regions. To give an idea of the size and population of these
different areas here are some details about the Sigor Division, where I carried
out my fieldwork. Sigor Division is approximately 1,980 square kilanetres,
and is made up of 6 Locations; two of which are pastoral, one is semi-
pastoral and three are agricultural. There is a wide variation in population
density and area between the agricultural and pastoral Locations. For
example, Wei Wei Location is 253 square kilanetres and has a population density
of 21 per square kilometre, whereas the pastoral Location of Jasol is 622 square
kilometres and has a population density of five per square kilanetre.

Since the early 1500's there has been influence from outsiders, both
missionaries (especially the Catholic and Protestant missions), and the ruling
Sovernaent (the British colonial government, followed by the Kenya government
I er independence). However, Pokot have always been noted for their
Paternal resistance to change and modernisation (Schneider 1959). 1979, the
movement on the Pokot to modernise began to increase at a mere rapid rate due
arily to the new roads being built through the Pokot area from east and west. These roads brought an influx of other tribes into the area, as well as part-time employment for many Pokot men. The roads are being built partially because of defence (especially because of increased raiding in the Pokot and Turkana areas, due to the influx of arms and because of war and famine in Uganda, Ethiopia and Somalia), and also because of governmental plans for more general development in the hope of eventually opening the Pokot area to tourism and trade (particularly that resulting from tapping Lake Turkana for fish).

The areas bordering Trans Nzoia (the southwest sector of the Pokot area), are far more westernized because employment on European farms nearby has been an important aspect of their lives since the mid-1900's. Conversely, the pastoral Pokot (in the southeast and northwest sectors of the Pokot area) have been less affected by change and development programmes, which are not concentrated in these more arid areas. The Katuw area lies somewhere in between these two, both geographically and in relation to modernization. Generally speaking, the people of Katuw have remained stubbornly aloof from modernization (as is partially indicated by the photographs). This is not to say that they have not been affected by such changes, but it is to emphasize that the Pokot, in general, & the people of Katuw, in particular, have chosen to place more importance on their own indigenous system and values. In a very real sense, every Pokot is affected by the area rates that they must pay to the government every year. In most areas, although there are a nasab of schools and missions, there is a very low attendance. Rather than taking their complaints to the government courts, most Pokot take their cases to be settled by the traditional council of elders. In a more subjective sense, the people of Katuw are beginning to value western goods and clothing, and will buy these goods whenever possible. Money is becoming generally more available these goods, as more men are being employed on constructing roads. This showed young men to have more influence than previously, which, in turn,
. d to * weaning of the indigenous systan.

Bering introduced the Pokot in general, let us now consider, in particular, the Pokot, among whom most of my research was oonducted.
Chapter II. Social Relationships and Grouping*

This chapter introduces the letting of ordinary day-to-day interactive the Pokot agriculturists by looking at:- those interactions which characterise the most Important kin and affinal relationships; the way in which people are categorised by age and sex, and what behaviours these categories entail; the organisation and functions of the Pokot agricultural coesunity; and the definitions and functions of the household as a unit of production and reproduction. In this way, I examine the most significant social relationships and social groupings which are operative among the agricultural Pokot and form the backdrop to the main focus of this thesis.

II.1. Significant Relationships defined by Kinship and Affinity

The following descriptions of significant kinship and affinal relationships for Individual Pokot serve as an introduction and orientation to my detailed diaousaion about the relationship between the sexes and sexual identity. For every Pokot the most important ritual validation of sexual identity occurs at their initiation ceremonies which mark the transition from childhood to adulthood. Pokot themselves recognise the importance of this as taking place at one particular time in an individual's life cycle, and during the initiation rites they take many references to the social roles which have bee's and win be expected of each individual. In order to give a picture of continuity, this section reviews the significant sex related social roles of an individual over his/her life cycle.

In the same way that this section does not undertake a total inventory of various roles, it does not attempt a total inventory of Pokot kinship. Xinsh*^ important principle of social differentiation amongst the Pokot, but this flexible and prone to interpretation end manipulation. Some of th/
Chapter U. Social Relationships and Grouping

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inspect towards his wife.

The husband/wife relationship is the most important relationship defined in Pokot. The relationship forms the basis of the household and the production unit and, as such, is the foundation unit of the society. The relationship between the adults is, however, less clearly defined than other relationships based on kinship and age (although there are of course degrees of manipulation in the kinship and age systems). A person is actually born into a kinship network, and his relationships are defined with particular **3bara of that group (his parents, siblings, grandparents, etc.) and to a degree with others outside it. Relationships based on age are also clearly defined and, as a person gets older, he naturally moves up in his position of seniority and status. Although a number of social rules exist, there is no exact specification of who a person will marry, how the relationship between husband and wife will be conducted, or whether a person's spouse will remain with him or her. None of these factors is absolute, yet for Pokot society to continue it is essential that couples marry, women reproduce and adult father are defined.

The factor of choice probably adds to the inherent flexibility which exists in the husband/wife relationship, but it is also important that this relationship is the foundation for the unit of production and reproduction among the Pokot agriculturists. This means that the husband/wife relationship must be sustained in order for the household to expand and prosper. As a social fact this is accepted by both men and women. There is an understanding that as husband and wife they need each other and there must be a degree of **3flemsnrity and negotiation for the relationship to be sustained. However, individuals of opposite sex, dependent on each other, they inevitably have barrells and conflicts over the management and control of their property and children. This close dependency on each other may act as a factor in escalating the antagonism between husbands and wives, as well as the fact that there are few alternatives open to them as individuals. His conflicts over the
Ijift resouroes of labour, stock and land are not dissipated In any way as
•ijzbt be In a larger polygynous homestead and, in the oaae of the

Itural Pokot^there are no acceptable aooial alternatives to Marriage and
-aall unit of production and homestead. In this discussion of the

egotionship between the spouses, a comment should be made on the relationship
vttween co-wires. Polygynous households are rare among the agriculturists In
φ0PSriMon to the pastoralists. Among the agriculturists a men cannot Barry
pothter wife without the permission of his senior wives. Hot only do they
bit* to agree that another wife would be useful to the ha&estead, but there has
to ba a certain agreement on the ohoIce of the woman involved. This is later
oosfiraed by the fact that a man's wives have to give up some of their allocated
herds, both to pay for the bridevealth of another wife, and also as direct
gifts to her,which she then adds to her allocated herd. Although co-wives live
la separate huts with allocated resources, each having a responsibility of
earing for and feeding her own children, they are expected to cooperate with
each other. They are supposed to help In the cultivation of each other's
farms, as well as caring for each other's children whenever necessary. The
children of one homestead refer to and address their own mother, as well as the
other wives of their father, by the same term, yo; mother.

Amongst themselves, wives are ranked according to aeniority, with the first
vife being in the accepted position of authority over the other wives. Pron
the case examples I have of polygynous households among the agriculturists, it
*P?ears that there is limited cooperation and reseot between wives, and
w€iousies and conflicts quickly arise over the husband's distribution of stock
grain. Another source of conflict between wives is the amount of
Mention a husband gives to his different wives. It Is a ccmscn coeplaint
fera senior wives that their husband favours the youngest wife of the homestead.
^these reasons the relationship between co-wives is often fraught with
^ftgonisis^snd It is not unusual for wsacn of polygynous households to return to
^ Parental hoae, and eventually set up a separate homestead with their grown
Both parents refer to their daughter as chepten; JUT daughter (the wo<^ g^fto la used to refer to girls In general as wall as referring to daughter*; glstera, etc.). The parents refer to their aon aa warinja; our aon (the wo^ firl i» sometimes used to describe boys as well as eons, brothers, etc.). Children usually address or refer to their Mother aa jo (they can also uae or komot), and their father aa papo or kwanda.

If Pokot are asked if they would rather have daughters or sona, they csuxlly answer with the ideal and aay they would want to hare both daughtera a^d sons

alternately: "like two different coloured beads" • However, when questioned again, both aen and women, but women in particular, usually aay t^ they would like to hare at least one or two sons, but more daughters. Pros the Pokot point of view, in simplest economic terms, parents receive wealth because of their daugfctera, but have to expend wealth because of their acsis.

On the other hand, all Pokot want at least one son to carry on the patriline^S0 /jld of the father, and ideally, to look after the parents and their property in*ge.

*mother and her small children. Mothers are considered fully responsible

Probably the most openly affectionate relationship in Pokot is that bet^o8n their maAll children; a mother is responsible for socializing the children/for feeding and clothing them, and oaring for their health (all women know vari^11* Verbal medicines although certain women specialise in the field and are kno^8; ** ghesaktln or doctors). The close relationship between mother and child la •strongly reixxforoed by a physical attachment which results because the chil^ ** veaned until he or she is two to three years old. One of the most dealing examples of the attachment between mother and child, is the fact ••other will give her child a piece of higher own tasbilical cord to handl^ so as to ensure that he/she will become a "polite" person (the isnbil^5#1 ia out two to three inches from the beiby's body at birth and when it

**** Tr thi5 -sther k*epa it in her aHrt it to her child when h?/^1*
The close intimacy between Bother and child continues until her children approximately four years old. However, mother raoaina f i d o T h e socialisation of her children, both sales end family, ggtll they are approximately seven to eight when they begin to work end participle more fully in the wider public donein. A particularly close familiarity develops between mothers and daughters because they do most of their daily tasks together. This familiarity, as well as their identification with each other as 'women', become apparent at the daughter's initiation rite. Seen after initiation the daughter will marry, and although it is not recognised publicly, Brothers have an important say in the choice of their daughter's spouse.

Although the relationship between mothers and sons is also intimate, it is marked more by deference and respect than by affection. After the age of eight, ehan Jobs become sex specific, a son will group together with other boys or work with his father doing various agricultural or herding tasks rather than being involved in domestic tasks. However, the close bond which exists between mother and sen is revealed after the son marries and he brings his wife to the homestead. The mother is then in the respected position of authority in the homestead and, generally speaking, she can rely on the support of her grown sons if quarrels should arise between herself and her husband. A marriage is initially patrilocal and then neolocal, it is considered ideal that the last born son cares for his parent*. The last born son is not only the mother's darling, but he should also inherit the bulk of her property.

The relationship between a father and his children is more distant, and both male and female children are taught to respect their father as head of the ka^ahold. As adolescents, both girls and boys must leave the house and sleep * different place away from their parents. Pokot emphasise that this is *cauzae daughters should not sleep in the same house as their fathers, but it applies to sons who should not sleep in the same house as their fathers, but it
in Pokot. It does not involve the same strict avoidance taboos as, for example, exist amongst the Saaburu (Spencer, 1965: 212). Fathers have a stronger relationship with their sons than they do with their daughters because sons are supposed to inherit their father's property. It is however, not unusual for fathers and sons to quarrel over property rights, particularly when the sons are older (I know of such a dispute in which the son actually beat his own father). The father bestows his eldest son, who later inherits the bulk of his property.

Grandparents and grandchildren address and refer to each other reciprocally as kuko. As the interaction between grandparents and grandchildren is usually between older adults and children, there is no differentiation made between the sexes. The relationship between grandparents and their grandchildren is playful, with the grandparents often teasing and telling stories to their grandchildren.

0. Siblings

A sister addresses and refers to her brother as warlinyan; my brother, and a brother calls his sister cheptsnim; my sister. The same terms are used within one sex as across the sexes. A woman's children call their mother's sister jo; mother, and she addresses them as her sons and daughters. A woman's children call their mother's brothers eet, and the same vice versa. A man's children call their father's sister cherko, and the same vice versa. A man's children call their father's brother papo; father, and he addresses them as his sons and daughters.

The relationship between siblings is supportive and friendly. Generally speaking, as youngsters, siblings play freely with each other, although older siblings have the responsibility of caring for their younger siblings. When becoming sbcut eight years old, sisters and brothers often form separate gradually becoming Bore involved with their own peers as they reach adolescence. As adolescents, they are not, however, taught to strictly avoid...
other. In fact, unlike other close relatives, brothers and sisters are to dance with each other, as well as to see each other during their Periods of seclusion at initiation.

The importance of the brother/sister relationship becomes more apparent after siblings have arrived. Brothers have little direct say in whose their girfants will marry, but they will most probably receive some of their sisters' bridewealth after their father dies. Because of this, sisters are always welcomed in their brothers' homes, and brothers are expected to support their sisters whenever necessary. Another particularly important relationships between mother's brothers' and sisters' daughters, which in turn reinforces the brother/sister relationship. Mother's brothers have a great deal of say in whom their sisters' daughters will marry (particularly the last born daughter) as well as receiving part of the bridewealth of their sisters' daughters. Sisters' daughters must respect their mother's brothers (who are said to have a particularly strong curse), but they can also expect their assistance whenever necessary. As one elder said, "they do not leave first child, whose property is at that home; the property they have eaten".

The relationship between a mother's sister and her sister's children is friendly, and as youngsters the children often play with their other "mother". The children must treat their fathers' sisters with respect, although the relationship between them is nonetheless friendly and without fear. A token gift is given to the father's sisters when their brothers' daughters marry, relationship between father's brothers and brothers' children is one of Terence and respect towards their other "father". Father's brothers receive part of the bridewealth for their brothers' daughters, however, spends largely on the relationship between brothers and whether listed each other in the past. Brother's daughters must respect their brothers, although they do not fear the same extent as the other. Mother's brothers, nor can they count on their assistance.
In fact, unlike other close relatives, brothers and sisters are not to danoe with each other, as well as to see each other during their lods of seclusion at initiation.

The importance of the brother/sister relationship becomes more apparent when siblings have married. Brothers have little direct say in whom their filters will marry, but they will most probably receive some of their sisters' bridewealth after their father dies. Because of this, sisters are always wtlcaae in their brothers' hcaes, and brothers are expected to support and help their sisters whenever necessary. Another particularly important relationship that between mother's brothers' and sisters' daughters, which in turn reinforces the brother/sister relationship. Mother's brothers have a great deal of say in whom their sisters' daughters will marry (particularly the last born daughter) as well as receiving part of the bridewealth of their sisters' daughters. Sisters' daughters must respect their mother's brothers (who are said to have a particularly strong curse), but they can also expect their assistance whenever necessary. As one elder said, "they do not leave that child, whose property is at that home; the property they have eaten".

The relationship between a mother's sister and her sister's children is friendly, and as youngsters the children often play with their other "mother". The children must treat their fathers' sisters with respect, although the relationship between them is nonetheless friendly and without fear. A token gift is given to the father's sisters when their brothers' daughters marry. The relationship between father's brothers and brothers' children is one of deference and respect towards their other "father". Father's brothers should receive part of the bridewealth for their brothers' daughters, however, this depends largely on the relationship between brothers and whether they have listed each other in the past. Brothers' daughters must respect their mother's brothers, although they do not fear them to the same extent they fear mother's brothers, nor can they count on their stance in the same way.
9. daughter-in-law usually refers to and addresses her father and mother-
Igwig as potich, and they address her as potih or by her olan name. The

tsr of address changes, however, according to the gift of stock the parents-in

4^t their daughter-in-law when they bless her at marriage. If they give
tuair daughter-in-law a cow she addresses then as potich; she addresses them

as feg'o if he is given an or; and pokor if she is given a sheep. The gifts

that daughters-in-law are given should relate to their order of seniority (the

first wife being given a cow, the second wife an ox, and so on), however,
aongst the agriculturists (where polygyny is rare) daughters-in-law usually

o^l their parents-in-law potich as a term of respect no matter what gift of
stock they are given, even if it is only a goat. A daughter-in-law Mist show

rtaped towards both of her parents-in-law. The mother-in-law is in the

accepted position of authority in her son's homestead. The daughter-in-law

should cooperate with her mother-in-law and they usually do their daily tasks
together; however, she must also do as she ia told and there are often

conflicta between them. A daughter-in-law must respect her father-in-law
to the extent of avoiding physical contact with him (for example, aha should

not shake tends with him).

As a term of respect, a son-in-law refers to or addresses his mother-in-

as potich and she addresses him in the same way. A son-in-law addresses

or refers to his father-in-law as agoi, a term of address which is used more
generally between elders or stock associates* Scns-in-lcw should be careful

^ respectful towards their parents-in-law. Because they are the same sex,

he relationship between a ecn-in-law end his father-in-law ia less servile and

•Gained than between a son-in-law and his mother-in-law. The actual

however, between an individual sen-in-law and his parents-in-law

•Peada largely on whether he has been able to meet his bridewealth paymenta,

S&l

^asisted hia parents-io-^7
**Categories Defined by Age and Sex**

jo the broader analysis of Pokot gender constructs, and specifically

the siapl\(^1\) binary opposition of male i female has little relevanoe.\(^1\)

\(t\), vot. the category of *female* is not really a Meaningful one, and

\(\% \rangle s\) such, are not an identifiable group. \(\%\) There are certainly values

Ijiarchies based on the notions of femaleness and aaleness, as well as

iffertent perspectivenes stemming from their varying interest\(\^\). However, the

fokot further define the larger categories of sex on the basis of age.

for women the age categories break down as follows:

- **Tipln**: young girls before initiation
- **Chemeri**: female initiates during their seclusion period
- **Mrar**: women before the birth of their first child
- **tor**: women after they have given birth
- **Kckon**: old women (often referring to women past menopause)

The general age categories for men are as follows:

- **Karaohinen**: boys before they are initiated
- **Tivoa**: male initiates during their seclusion period
- **Moren**: young and middle-aged men
- **Poq**: old men or elders

The social significance of these age categories is discussed throughout the
thesis, but it is important to note from the beginning that, in Pokot, the

Actors' perceptions and roles are not only based on sex differences, but also

on **age** differences. \(\%\) Therefore, the relation between different age groups has

\(\%\) significant

effect on the relations within the same sex and between the

\(\%\) it is Interesting to note that, even from the brief description above,

\(\%\) clear that, unlike the age categories for men, those for wcaen are bas\(\%\)

\(\%\) their sexuality and procreative powers.

\(\%\)

**Formalities of the Kale Age-Set System**

J.G. Peristiany has already described in detail the ccoplex age-set sy\(\%\)n\(\%\) of

pastoral Pokot in two articles (1951).\(\%\)

\(\%\) necessary to review some of the main points here, concentrating crj

**thi»**

\(e\) age-aet system is relevant to women end the control it gives to eld
In a discussion of the Pokot age-set system, it first be pointed out that the pastoral Pokot have adopted aspects of the gArsaojccg and Turkana age-set systems and blended them into the age-set system of the Pokot agriculturists, where circumcision is the main rite by which initiates men into adulthood. In Pokot acknowledge this and hold male circumcision to be very important (mainly in terms of identifying themselves as Pokot and different from surrounding pastoral groups who do not circumcise). In contrast to this, many pastoralist men living near the Pokot borders (both in the Karasuk area bordering Karamojong and Turkana, and the pokot and Baringo areas bordering Turkana, Njemps and Tugun) either do not circumcise or delay circumcision for many years, and place more importance on the adopted initiatory rite of aapana and other related ceremonies. The details of rituals and ceremonies vary from one Pokot area to another; this is particularly true in relation to the male age-set ceremonies in which the t-jiing and ritual proceedings vary quite dramatically, not only between the agriculturists and pastoralists but also within each of the two communities.

I will use my own material and that of Peristlany to review some of the main aspects of the male age-set system among the agriculturists (in the Vei Wei and Muino Locations), comparing it briefly to that of the pastoralists (in the Baringo District near Tengulbei).

There are approximately eight or nine age-sets, known as pin in Pokot, although these are cyclical. One pin is made up of approximately three or four circumcision groups and circumcision takes place approximately every three to nine years. The age-set names thus change every nine to sixteen years. **eeh (1911: 6) claims that the circumcision set recruits members every fifteen years, while Peristlany (1951: 297) claims the duration of an age-set ten years. The Pokot themselves claim that male circumcision takes place frequently these days than it did long ago, which would make the duration of an age-set shorter, but they often argue about when a new age-set was formed

Berber? xxxre recruited. This makes the duration of any particular
t difficult to locate, but it is likely that the duration of different
actually vary, and are slightly different from one area to another,
\(^{15}\) among the agriculturists, after completing the three-month circumcision
a youth attains full sexual and social status (described in detail in
\(<\text{fc}>=\text{ter V.2:B}). Some years after completing initiation a man usually
\(p_{2}\) for a sarara; an individual\(^{1}\) initiation into manhood which entails the
g\(^{u}\) entering of an ox or goat for the community. Among the agriculturists,
\(\approx_{T} s^{a}\) is not a prerequisite to marriage and I have known many cases where men
\(k_{1} r_{2} a_{r} p_{e} m_{e} r_{d} e_{2} d_{2} m_{2} e_{2} r_{d} m_{2} a_{r} n_{a}\) performed sapana after marriage (in such cases it is considered
\(l_{s} r_{d} s^{a} r_{d}\) icious for the wife to be present, so she simply stays at home). It is
\(u_{p}\) to the initiate to decide when he wishes to perform sapana, and among the
agriculturists it is usually performed just before or after a man marries.
The time period between circumcision and marriage varies according to the
circumstances of each individual, so that the timing of sapana is also
changeable. Whatever the case, among the agriculturists sapana is regarded as
\(b_{a}^{n} a_{l} l_{d} s^{a} t^{a} r_{d} m_{2} n_{2} l_{2} e_{2} m_{2} a_{2} m_{2} e_{2} r_{2} m_{2} a_{2} n_{2}\) far less important than circumcision, and I would agree with Peristiany
\((1951: 20^{1})\) when he writes that, among the hill people, not to do sapana before
marriage only results in a loss of prestige.

The other ceremony, apart from initiation, which the agricultural elders
regard as being extremely important is poro. It is a very secretive ceremony
\(w_{2} h_{2} c h_{2} m_{2} i_{2} n_{2}\) which the elders speak of in relation to the circumcision age-set cycle,
chiming

\(i_{2} t_{2} a_{2} n_{2} t_{2} n_{2} a_{2} a_{2} n_{2} t_{2} i_{2} n_{2} r_{2} e_{2} c_{2} n_{2} a_{2} m_{2} e_{2} r_{2} m_{2} a_{2} n_{2}\) ancient tradition among the agriculturists and not
\(l_{2} r_{2} e_{2} a_{2} n_{2} t_{2} a_{2} n_{2} o_{2} t_{2} r_{2} e_{2} a_{2} n_{2} t_{2} i_{2} n_{2} r_{2} e_{2} c_{2} n_{2} a_{2} m_{2} e_{2} r_{2} m_{2} a_{2} n_{2}\) other pastoral tribes, as is sapana. Neither Peristiany nor
\(w_{2} l_{2} e_{2} d_{2} c_{2} a_{2} n_{2} e_{2} r_{2} e_{2} c_{2} n_{2} a_{2} m_{2} e_{2} r_{2} m_{2} a_{2} n_{2}\) make reference to poro, but this may be due to the fact that they
worked in Pokot pastoralist communities who do not practice poro. In
\(f_{2} r_{2} o_{2} m_{2} a_{2} n_{2} l_{2} t_{2} e_{2} a_{2} n_{2} t_{2} i_{2} n_{2} r_{2} e_{2} c_{2} n_{2} a_{2} m_{2} e_{2} r_{2} m_{2} a_{2} n_{2}\) from my own records Pokot pastoralists claim to know nothing about it.
should take place some three to six years after circumcision, usually
\(r_{2} a_{2} m_{2} a_{2} n_{2} n_{2} a_{2} t_{2} e_{2} r_{2} e_{2} c_{2} n_{2} a_{2} m_{2} e_{2} r_{2} m_{2} a_{2} n_{2}\) a man has married (the last poro which took place in Kntuw
\(e_{2} r_{2} o_{2} m_{2} t_{2} a_{2} n_{2} t_{2} e_{2} a_{2} n_{2} t_{2} i_{2} n_{2} r_{2} e_{2} c_{2} n_{2} a_{2} m_{2} e_{2} r_{2} m_{2} a_{2} n_{2}\) oately six years ago, but the elders insisted that poro could be
\(^{o} n_{2} a_{2} n_{2} a_{2} \) "whenever there was enough food and the yeusg nen be/rge • \(l_{2} d_{2} a_{2} n_{2} t_{2} e_{2} r_{2} e_{2} c_{2} n_{2} a_{2} m_{2} e_{2} r_{2} m_{2} a_{2} n_{2}\)
"ereemony" oven if this was only about three years after the previous

kike incircumcision, poro is held for a group of men belonging to one
Qisainity who are instructed by the elders of that community. The
proceedings of poro last for approximately one week with the old men of the
community staying in a cave where the ancestors are said to live, and the
young men camping near by. Every young man must provide the elders with a
cat and grain, and two to three goats are consumed by the elders and
participants each day. At poro elders teach the young men speial ritual
tongs and how to invoke the ancestors, an important aspect of which entails
calling the ancestors (usually going back only three generations) of each of
the individual participants. Poro culminates when the men invoke all the
ancestors out of the cave and go around to the various houses of the
neighbourhoods. Women are said to be extremely frightened during this time
and lock themselves and their children in their huts. The ancestors - and
jeen - make a great deal of noise throwing sand and stones at the hut walls,
especially at the huts of women who are known to be difficult and disbelieving.
A man who has completed poro is respected in the cominanity by wamen and
younger men. After poro a man has the right to use the word poroek, said as
* nild curse and, more importantly, is able to invoke the ancestors and thus
Perform the blessing an or cursing which takes place at most ceremonies and
rituals. Although Peristiary does not mention poro he makes reference to the
fact that the inhabitants of the hills (the agriculturists) are regarded as the
living repository of ancestral values (1951: 189) and that circumcision is
*ociated with the attainment of extra-human or heavenly powers (1952: 190).
ould suggest that men only attain 'heavenly powers' after the completion of
when they have learnt how to control the ancestors, rather than at
acision. However, poro cannot be regarded as completely separate from
Vision and would probably*e most accurately described as the last rite in
circumcision age-set cycle among the agriculturists.
fo review how th® *ge-set system affects women, let us go beck to the
Is*
smog the agriculturists. As soon ss s man has oompleted
inition and accumulated enough stock to pay bridewealth, he can marry. Tkia
in relation to the wealth of individual families, the umber of sons in
son of an older wealthy man will
fairly youl^s). The only ethnic-wide restriction (adhered to by the
^iculturists and psstoralists) regarding age-sets and marriage, is that men
of the same age-set should not marry each other's daughters, but this does not, la itself, ensure that only elders can marry young women. In fact, among the
agriculturists it is probable that a wealthy man will marry a young woman (just
after she has oompleted initiation) when he is still fairly young. Ibis is
 diferent from what Llewelyn-Davies reports about the Maasai,^ and
Spencer reports about the Samburu (1965). In both cases there seems to be a
fairly wide age gap between husbands and wives (for example among the Ifaasai a
man does not marry until at least ten years after circumcision).

The wide age gap which exists between husbands and wives among the Samburu
and Uaaai is partially due to the emphasis which both societies place on the
period of moranhood; when young men act as warriors before becoming elders.
For both societies, there are various ceremonies leading up to moranhood and
others leading out of it. Amongst the Maasai^
Llewelyn-Davies reports that
these of these ceremonies are performed on behalf of the individual, while othera
held on behalf of the age-set. All the ceremonies demarcate the various
changes of status of the initiates, and the timing and ritual proceedings of most
these are controlled by the elders. Even though j^oran have their own
^niration and to an extent lead a marginal or secular life, their transforma-
tion into elderhood is controlled primarily by me£iggers of the alternate eener
^aet. Amongst the agricultural Pokot the asphasis on moranhood and its
riou, gradations is negligible ana almost nonexistent.
Tho --t the Polrot pestorr-lists is cniiler to that of the
- 1 */ ~ - T^e ill T.u$GSt the Pckot
actuz the agriculturists. It la held to be more important
raacna, and for eatabliahing oloae aooio-econcoio relations
ma of men or age-nates over a wider geographical area. According
M951j 189) sub-aeta are formed by men who have completed aapan
year period, A number of sub-sets form a munlan: colour
\(\text{\text{(formed once every twelve years), and two of these munlan form a aapana-}}\)
There are only two aapan-sets and these are cyclical. Periatiany
\(\text{\text{reports (1951? z83) that the last munlan ceremony was performed long ago,}}\)
although it has left its mark on the present-day system. However, in 1979 the
pokot pastoralists in the Baringo area told mo that munlan was performed fairly
recently and were able to describe it in detail (even amongst the agriculturists
an elder told me that "the words of munlan - amongst the pastoralists - had not
finished"). * This indicatea that the highly formalised age-aet system is still
operating among the pastoralists. The timing and organization of each of the
different ages of the age-set system is controlled by the elders of the alternate aapan-set. In this way, the power of the elders amongst the
pastoralists is very strong and covers a wide area. This would help to explain
why moranhood is far more important (both in a ritual and socio-economic sense)
among the pastoralists than among the agriculturists. Also, amongst the
piatorialists, where the rate of polygyny is fairly high, the formalised age-aet
V3t« allows the elders to delay the marriages of young men by delaying the
different stages of moranhood.

Amongst the agriculturists, the situation is very different. Schneider
locates the period of Pokot moranhood as being after circumcision end before
but as we have seen among the agriculturists this period varies with
individual and can be extremely short. Although young men are at their
virile during this period, they are not recognised as a distinct group
*** their own organization or responsibilities, For the agriculturist*, it
Probably be more accurate to describe the period between oircuncisicion and
*3 Pokot moranhood because it is only cS'
\(\text{\text{&^ h=seaae}}\)
full elders. Married men or heads of households, they do have full political rights. In the onaininity council, although they do not have the ritual authority and powers of persuasion and influence as full elders. In the case, there is little emphasis or importance placed on the period of goranhood amongst the agriculturists. This may be partially due to the fact that there is little need to have an organised group of warriors, since the neighbouring tribes are not particularly hostile, possibly because the herds of the agriculturists are relatively small and not really worth stealing, and the fact that there is little emphasis placed on moranhood amongst the agriculturists, suggests that there is less control practised by a particular group of elders over the larger group (or groups) of young men, than there is amongst Bast African pastoralists. The power of the elders amongst the agriculturists appears to be far more localised, with the elders confining their ritual and political authority primarily to the neighbourhood or community via which they reside.

n.3. The Agricultural Pokot: Beginns and Neighbourhoods as Areas of Social Organization

The agricultural Pokot live in the Charangani Hills lying to the centre of the wider Pokot area (see map). At a first glance, when one locks up at the Charangani Hills, they appear to be extremely steep, rocky, covered in lush bush and, generally, hidden in cloud or mist. On closer observation one notices that certain geographically distinct areas are dotted with huts (huts from 100 to 500 yds apart) with a number of farms running down the nearby slopes. Each of these areas is a separate region comprised of separate neighbourhoods.

The agricultural Pokot subdivide their area into a number of named regions or coczamities. The regions vary in size, but most range between one to three square miles in area. Each region is further subdivided into three to five kcrok; named neighbourhoods. Neighbourhood boundaries are ad defined in terms of geographical features such as rivers and ridges.
^bournhooda vary both in size of area and population.

J lired in the Katuw region and carried out research in Katuw and nearby

fijiona. Katuw is in the government location of Vei Wei, and lies in the
fjothill® of the Charangani's at an elevation of approximately 3*500 ft. The

area of Katuw is approximately one square mile of hilly terrain with a total of

thirty-seven households, nine of which are temporary households (young men from

the highlands grazing their oattle in the foothills). In 1978 the total

population of the twenty-eight established households in the Katuw region was

142; 36 adults and 66 children (two of the households were single men without

dependants).

Comparatively speaking, the households in Katuw and the surrounding

regions in the foothills are fairly poor, with the basic unit of production

being relatively small (discussed in detail in the next section and again in

Chapter H1). In other agricultural areas, particularly the highlands,

touseholds own larger herds (of small stock as well as cattle) as well as owning

and using larger pieces of land. This is especially so in the locations of

Kapenguria and Cheperaria (to the south-west of Katuw), where government and

iaaion programmes have concentrated their efforts of modernization, and more

sophisticated technology is used to cultivate larger tracts of land.

Throughout the agricultural Pokot area clan sections or lineages (usually

two to three) are localized into korok or neighbourhoods. The Pokot are patri-

lineal with named exogameua clans and sub-clans which are further identified

with totemic animals. Each clan or sub-clan is composed of a number of lineages

that have a shallow depth. Individual Pokot remember their own patrilineal kin back to

or four generations only. They also remember the names of certain

nostora of the clan who lived long ago, but cannot specify how these

Recone are related to their own patrilineage as, for example, the Nuer do


xae land within a region and near the settlement area belongs to the clans

in that region, but is not necessarily cultivated by people of these
In the region of Kauw most of the nearby irrigated land belongs to two olsns: Chepokwegho and Tullin. Of the twenty-eight established households in Kauw, seven use Chepokwegho land because the household head belongs to the Chepokwegho olan; another six use Tullin land because the household head belongs to the Tullin clan; nine use Chepokwegho land because the household head has rights in it through his affines or matrilateral kin; four use Tullin land for the same reasons; and two use Chepokwegho land because their forefathers bought it (for a female goat) long ago. Is such, only half of the male household heads are members of the olsns the land is said to be owned by.

Before the introduction of maize into the Pokot District in about 1920, the Pokot mainly cultivated finger-millet and sorghum. Both of these crops were cultivated on the hill slopes around their homes. Today, although a variety of crops are cultivated, the staple subsistence crop is Maize. People living in the foothills cultivate maize on the valley floor, while those living in the highlands do so on the hill slopes near their homes. Finger-sillet is also cultivated on the hill slopes as a secondary subsistence crop, as is sorghum to a lesser extent.

Essentially, cultivation in the Pokot District is dependent on adequate rainfall, although the irrigation system is used in times of drought and during the dry season to help bring on the maize in its later stages of growth. The Pokot identify three seasons: Dry Season, from January to loaroh; Eainy Season, from April to July; "When the country is becoming dry", from August to December. (This third season includes the short rains which normally fall froa October to tfoved&er.) Normally the Pokot plant their crops at the beginning of the rainy season, March-April, and harvest towards the middle of the dry season, September-October. However, there is a great deal of variation from year to year, not only because of the variation in the coming the rains and the amount of precipitation, but also because of the irld variation in altitudes throughout the District. The people in t>- fr^M Ua,
sXO feet, plant and reap their harvests much earlier in the year than
up to 9000 feet. To maximise this advantage, Pokot try to cultivate in several different eeo-acres.

Ita Pokot endeavour to predict, and also try to control, the amount of rain to cultivate. The relative position of the stars, in particular Mars and Venus, is interpreted to predict whether rain will fall or not (see also The annual ritual of alndagh provides another of predicting the rain, as well as blessing the cultivation year. Certain

regarded as prophets are said to have special powers to be able to predict the rain. A prophet will tell what the rains will be like, either from what he has dreamt or from what he has "read" in the intestines of a slaughtered goat or cow. If the prophet is paid with beer or grain, he is said to be able to "tie" the rain in times of flood, or for a short time when an important ceremony is meant to occur, as well as having the power to make it rain in times of circuit. The elders of the neighbourhood are also regarded as having a significant power over ilat, rain god or rain. Elders as a group can bless or pray to ilat, either asking for rain or asking ilat to come "gently and slowly".

Irrigation systems operate in various neighbourhoods and regions. In the fei Wei and Muino Valley, much of the land is irrigated from the Wei Wei Hiver. The Wei Wei River rises in the Cherangani Hills and flows northwards down the Rift Valley, eventually meeting other rivers before flowing into Lake Turkana. The Wei Wei flows all year round and to my knowledge has never run dry. All along the river the Pokot have built irrigation canals to run the water, and each main canal supplies one or more regions, while small irrigation ducts running off the main canal supply individual farms. The

Pokot construct the main canal by daaning the river just below a small rapid. Build a dam wall across the river, which is supported by trees and of stones piled up and cemented together with tree rcctc. The ** directs some of the river water into the main canal nh the
In Katuw the main canal is about three feet wide and one to two feet deep, following the edge of the arable land of the Chepokwegho and Tullin clans on a talley floor. In most years the canal runs for about a half-mile distance along this line, but when it is necessary it can easily be extended for at least another half-mile. All the work involved in the maintenance, repair and pension of the irrigation system is done exclusively by the men of the region, and how much of the canal should be dug and reopened is decided by the jstuw council of elders. To rebuild the main wall in the river and reinforce the canal running along the bank, is a day's work for a group of 15 to 20 men. To clear out the main canal, which sometimes involves having to redig it, the tin canal can require such a group of men a day for every 200-300 feet. To extend the irrigation, thus having to build virtually a new canal, is hard work and can take an entire day for every 100 feet.

All the water from the main canal is used for one to two days to irrigate one person's farm by opening the small irrigation ducts running off the main canal. These small ducts run along the edges of individual farms and in many oases mark the farm boundary. The council of elders has to decide when, and for whom, the irrigation will be opened. If a person misuses the irrigation, for example, by opening the ducts to irrigate his land without receiving the prior permission of the council, he will be fined. I have never witnessed a case in which the men refused to open the irrigation furrows for either a man or a woman, but it is a significant affirmation of male control that permission to do so must be obtained through men from the elders of the region.

In addition to the work groups formed by men to maintain the irrigation households of one or more neighbourhoods often form into groups working a otaer's farms on a rotation basis or for a remuneration of beer and @tiaes a goat. These work groups are usually composed of residents from Ore £lian, and are often sex specific. An individual man or woman can hire his/her otsi work party by announcing that they will provide beer or a
In order to get a particular task done, such as weeding, fencing or

it, bouaeholders and elders within one neighbourhood, and often
one region, are closely related through feinship and marriage. They are
el's uniited by their Joint responsibility for the irrigation system, and through
^ir responsibility to act as a council. The council of elders not only takes
dicisiccess regarding the irrigation but also aettles disputes, both those
totolving other neighbourhoods or regions and those between households within
gut neighbourhood. The elders of one neighbourhood have their own council
god seating place (usually under a large tree), both of which are referred to
u kokwo. There is also a larger kokwo which is held by the elders of one
region. As a household head each man has the right to voice his opinion at
tiy council meeting, and disputes are finally settled by coommal consensus.
However, elders have the most influence at kokwo, not only because of their
rituil authority (discussed in II.2:A) but also because of their oratory skills
and powers of persuasion, which are helped by their knowledge of previous cases.
Although women have no legal voice at kokwo (unless called upon in special
cthea such as adultery), their powers of persuasion and influence through
gossip and over their individual husbands, is an important factor in deciding the
final outcome of any case.

The Household as the Unit of Production and Reproduction.

Among the agricultural Pokot the household is the basic unit of reproduction
Production. This section examines the composition of the household and
e-songea over the developsonmental cycle, as well as how the labour
*cti
ies of the household are divided by sex and age. In Katuw, households
**nparatively small units of production, t'ld it is therefore beneficial for
to stey married, and together with their children work
rtv*htial orop and building up a large herd.
Household as a Unit of Reproduction: its Composition over the Cyclic Developmental Cycle

Izong the agricultural Pokot the household has, as its nucleus, a married couple and their unmarried children. Every marriage establishes the basis of a household and unit of reproduction. The marriage process is dealt with in detail in Chapter 11. In this section we look at how, in general terms, the composition of a household changes over time and under different circumstances. To begin with let us review these changes with reference to Fortes’ peculiar of the developmental cycle (1962: ip-5). When a man first marries he brings his wife to live in his parents’ home. Thus for the first few months of carriage the household or domestic group consists of a man, his wife, his younger siblings, and his mother and father. It is during the phase of ‘expansion’, when a man and his wife produce their children, that a man establishes his own household as a separate residential unit from that of his parents (initially in their compound and later in his own compound nearby). During this phase a man may marry more wives, building a separate house for each wife and her children. ‘Fission’ takes place and the domestic group becomes smaller, as sons and daughters marry and establish their own households elsewhere. ‘Replacement’ should ideally be by the last born son, who has the responsibility of taking care of his parents and their property during old age and until their death.

The composition of the household, however, varies greatly from this social as the circumstances of individual families change over time. During the first phase of ‘expansion’ (and possibly through the later phases) there may be more people living in a single household than just the husband, his wife and the children they produce. To begin with, a man may marry a woman who already has a child by another man or previous husband. If the child is a girl she will probably stay with her mother and her mother’s current husband until she wries. If the child is a boy he will, in most cases, go back to his father when he is approximately eight years old, become his coro ho irskes a
*pifioant contribution to the labour resources of that domestic group.  

*hen a man and his wife only hare one or two young children they will  
igaClJ * young fmaale relative (often a mother's younger sister)  
woe and take care of the children. * is a resident babysitter, she may  
,a with them for many years. It oan also happen that olose unmarried kin  
(tipically brothers) attach themselves to a flourishing domestic group rather  
than attempting to estsblish one on their own (for example, In the oase of a  
person who has had many unsuccessful marriages, is sterile or barren)*  

The second phase of 'fission' is often not as smooth as it should be.  
Instead of the domestic group becoming smaller it can, at times, actually  
becaae larger and its size may change many times before 'replacement' oocurs.  
Marriages of sens and daughters do not always work out as they are supposed to,  
end both sons and daughters might return to their parental home and stay there  
any years after their separation. When a woman feels that she haa been  
sistrested by her husband she will run back to her parents' home, sometimes  
vith aiJ sometimes without children. Ideally, this should only be for a few  
weeks during which time her husband should bring beer to her parents, settle  
the <jarrel and take his wife home. In practice, however, it is not unusual  
for a daughter to run to her parents' home and stay for many years or even  
Permanently (especially if she runs away many times from a number of different  
tosbands).  

In practice, 'replacement' varies according to the circumstances of  
dividual families. Although the Pokot say that it is the responsibility of  
last born son to take care of and eventually replace his parents, this is  
always the case. In fact, this depends more on the individual characters  
ved and the relationships parents have with their sons, than on the social  

Furthermore, if there are no sons, one of the daughters and her husband  
ill with her agsing parents, and take over the responsibility of their  
_property _when the parents die.
Household as a Unit of Production: the Division of Labour within the Household

The household is not only a unit of reproduction but is also the base of production among the agriculturists. As the base unit of production, the household is responsible for procuring its subsistence needs through the use of its own resources (land, labour and livestock). The production potential of each household, however, is not confined to the limits of its own resources but is interwoven with, and dependent on, a wide range of kinship, economic and political ties, primarily within the region but also beyond it. The acquisition, management and control of the household's property are dealt with in detail in Chapter 4. In this section we look at the division of labour within the household.

In one year a typical household will cultivate from four to six pieces of land, measuring from one to two acres of maize, and one-half to one acre of finger-millet or sorghum. Finger-millet or sorghum may be planted every other year, depending primarily on the yield of the previous harvest and rainfall. A household makes sure that the land they cultivate is in different areas and eco-zones. Luring any one cultivation period another five to ten pieces of land a household has access to are left fallow. By cultivating different crops in different eco-zones a household is assured of harvests at different times of the year. For example, the finger-millet harvest usually occurs in late August, the maize from the valley is ready by mid-October, and a'ixe from the highlands is not harvested till late November. Even if one household does not actually cultivate crops in different eco-zones, they can arrange to trade grain with their relations living in different eco-zones.

Some of these factors play a part in reducing the risk of hunger due to crop 'allure.

Each member of the domestic unit participates in the production for sustenance, and the various tasks are allocated on the basis of sex and age. Hand and wife make an almost equal contribution to the production.
Whereas the husband generally concentrates his efforts on the production of maize (the staple food in the Pokot diet), his wife works intensively on the finger-millet farms (the secondary subsistence crop). Men, who go to work earlier than women, are beginning to cultivate experimental crops (such as maize, sweet potato, tomatoes, and bananas) which are sold or p'vinged in the weekly market. Although this is on an extremely small scale, men already have more opportunity of participating in the cash economy than women.

Fork is done on the maize farms almost every day from mid-February to mid-October. Clearing the maize fields, digging, planting, guarding the crop and harvesting is done by both husband and wife, although they often work on the fields at different times of the day. For example, the wife usually does the work later than her husband after finishing her domestic chores, which are done in the morning. The wife and children guard the crop during the day while the husband sleeps in the fields to guard them against animals during the night. The hard labour involved, in the digging of maize fields and the clearing of all fields, both maize and finger-millet, is undertaken more by the husband than by the wife. The husband also does the fencing of all the fields, unless a very temporary fence is built by the wife, and builds the storage huts, thatching them, however, with grass cut by the wife.

The one task related to the production of a subsistence crop which is exclusively by the husband is the maintenance, repair and extension of the irrigation canals which are used in the maize fields. Other subsistence activities which are done exclusively by males, are fishing (approximately once a hunting as a group (done only during a drought, or if a larger wild *Spens to come into the area), and bee-keeping. If a household is large enough to have cattle, in addition to a herd of goats and sheep, the broad^

and his older sons will herd and care for these.

In addition to the labour contribution made by a wife to the cultivation of the crops, the act of planting, Treedzg, the end guarding 3nd
Probably the most important labour contribution made by a woman is in other subsistence tasks. The wife and her older girls gather edible leaves and which are eaten almost every day along with the staple of cooked grain. f®

and her children also care for, herd, water and milk the goats and

which includes the daily grinding, winnowing, and cooking of grain, as well as collecting firewood, and fetching water, take up approximately three hours of a rife® day and are essential domestic tasks. During the intensive cultivation period, the wife spends comparatively little time caring for her young children and doing household chores (such as sweeping, repairing household implements, etc®). On the other hand, she spends a good portion of her time on childcare and household tasks during the few months when little or no cultivation takes place. A reman also stays at home with her baby for the first few weeks after the baby is born, and devotes all her time to childcare.

The tasks children undertake up to the age of approximately eight are not specific, and do not involve the various cultivation tasks. A child's labour contribution is important with regard to childcare; at a very young age a child learns to take care of his/her younger siblings leaving the mother free to work on the fields during the day. Only at approximately eight years old, a child is considered to be "clever", does a girl begin helping her mother in domestic and subsistence tasks and a boy begin working with his father. The labour contribution made by children to the production of subsistence crops and livestock, playing and hunting (small game, rodents and birds), and girls spend time making beads and gossiping while gathering vegetables and domestic tasks. As they get older, both boys and girls do more work in the girls are often expected to take over some of the subsistence tasks usually accomplished by their mother.
Though the husband, wife and their adolescent children spend an almost

i-aunt of time and labour on cultivation, the wife does a great deal

t daily work when one considers the other subsistence and domestic tasks

has to perform. During the heaviest cultivation period the husband, wife

adolescent children spend approximately six hours each working in the

fitlida. addition to this, the wife spends another six to seven hours on

other subsistence and domestic tasks. As a result, during the intensive

cultivation period she may spend up to thirteen hours per day working on her

rious tasks.

When the husband is not working in his fields he is usually sitting with

» group of neighbours, resting, drinking, anchor discussing politics. Women

of one neighbourhood also meet as a group and often do their tasks together.

They meet almost daily to talk and grind their grain at a communal grinding

tone, but also prefer to gather wild vegetables or firewood together and do so

whenever possible. When there are fewer cultivation tasks women meet as a

group more often, especially because of the ceremonies and feasts which take

place during this period.

In most cases, it is only after the children have reached adolescence

and can make a full labour contribution, that a significant surplus can be

Produced by the household. Until then, the household is doing extremely well

it can produce enough grain in one year to meet its subsistence needs and

^U the

various ritual and social obligations it has. The amount of grain

household can produce is not solely dependent on the amount of labour it has

's disposal, but depends also on the amount and quality of the land it has

liable for cultivation and, more importantly, on the amount and timing of

n. After there had been too little rain in 1976, over half the house-

the Katuw region finished their supply of maize by May 1977, five

Wore the next harvest was due. The amount of grain which a household

not only depends on the number of mouths that have to be fed, but also

c^rial and ritual obligations it has to fulfil. These very over
to pay a dispute.

To conclude this section, I include a time chart to illustrate how a load is divided between different tasks and how it varies at times of the year. The chart is only approximate and applies to a with young children. It does not include how much time the woman takes on the farma of relatives, nor does it indicate the days when she restricted in performing subsistence tasks because of menstruation or p&ilibirth taboos.

The outer circle of the time chart shows how much time, in a total number of hours, women spend on subsistence tasks during the year. This total is calculated from the information provided in the inner circle of the chart: aiding up the number of hours spent on cultivation, and what I have called 'other subsistence tasks' (including essential domestic tasks). The colours in the divisions of the inner circle show how much time a wife spends from 6 a.m. to 9 a.m. on the various tasks she performs during the days of the month. As the chart shows, a total of thirteen hours per day can be spent on assistance tasks during the cultivation period in the months March to Kay, and again, from August through September: 6.5 hours on cultivation, and 6.5 hours on other subsistence tasks. During this time a wife devotes only approximately one hour directly to childcare, while another half-hour may be spent household chores. From mid-October to mid-January, the bulk of the time a wife spends on cultivation at other times of the year is instead spent in a combination of household chores and childcare, as well as handwork and
TIME CHART

Cultivation: Other Subsistence Tasks:
Household Chores: Child Care:
Handwork and Recreation:

JAN

DEC FEB

NOV

MAR

SEP

MAY

AUC JUN

JUL

38°
Chapter II

X tira recorded as many as twelve named age-sets, although there are opinions as to which are simply nicknames that will later become categorized into a larger age-set (thus being identified as the junior or section of the yun). Peristiany (1951, 169) reports on seven to circumcision age-sets, but I would suggest there are at least eight, jetaibly nine. The following are the names which most of the elders gysed on as recognised circumcision age-sets. Individual elders also have different opinions about the order of the age-sets. The following order was tried upon by most of the elders I spoke to, and is written from the youngest, recorded in 1978, to the eldest, whose members are now dead: kapelach (still recruiting members when boys were initiated in 1978; generally agreed that by the next initiation the name would change); korongoro; kakapanga; kapsakas (the latter two possibly becoming grouped into one later); sowo; kolumong (one of the oldest living men); main; chumwoj aaragutwa and nyongu.

In his dissertation, H.K. Schneider (1953) discusses Pokot religious beliefs as well as initiation rites, but makes no reference to poro.


Conant (1965) devoted an article to the discussion of neighbourhoods, entitled 'Korok: A variable unit of physical and social space the Pokot of East Africa'. Peristiany (1954) also discusses these units. What Peristiany (1954) refers to as a village corresponds to a kor; Sion or community. However, there seems to be some discrepancy in the figures he quotes for -illages and those I have recorded for korok. could be accounted for by the fact that the Pokot themselves use these and to some extent they overlap.
fettruf (1970) discusses the implications of economic development
and cultural modernization for women, pointing out that it is the men,
less the women, who reap the social and economic advantages.
Chapter III. Marriage

This chapter examines marriage; both the marriage process (here \textit{mm} and \textit{mgftQ} become married) and the alliance marriage establishes (the actual \textit{ftlationsb\^P} and Interaction between husbands and wives). Marriage in Pokot publishes the most significant of all relationships between \textit{women} and \textit{men} leading to the baai as the most important unit of social organization, the booeehold. For these reasons it is necessary to look in detail into the way marriages are determined, maintained and terminated. It is important to note from the outset that the marriage ceremonies are not ritually elaborate, and marriage is primarily a secular transaction which, amongst the agricultural Pokot, \textit{men} and \textit{women} go through fairly early. Ritual elaboration is instead concentrated on male and female Initiation rites, which must be seen as part of the marriage process. \textit{Women} are married almost directly after initiation, and etaj ritual elements of Initiation are carried over into the marriage rites (*Chapter V, p

This chapter focuses particularly on the different sorts of influence \textit{women} and \textit{men} have in determining their own marriages and those of their children, as well as the rights and influences husbands and \textit{Tea} have over the disposal and distribution of household resources.

1. The Marriage Process

There are three alternative ways of getting married in Pokot: through \textit{latlon}, where the marriage and bridewealth are discussed and agreed upon beforehand by the two families involved; through capture, in which the bride is captured and taken by force; and through elopement, where the couple take measures to run away together secretly. The two latter methods only occur when attempts at obtaining a wife through negotiation have
1th negotiations u soon as possible after the bride has reached her

jrideealth negotiations are of the utmost Importance because thej
the legality of marriage, and thereby confirm a commitment at sooio-
gro&omlo support between the two familiea involved. Once an agreement has

reached by the two families, and the bride has been taken to her
Riband• home, the couple are legally married. In a rery general sanaa, the
fife-receivers remain in debt to the wifa-givera as long as the woman in
question fulfils her duty aa a wife, especially that of producing children,
garrage gives a man certain rights with regard to hia wife and her economic
tad reproductive capacities, and gives a woman, and her family, various rights
uxi privileges with regard to her husband.
A. Sights and Obligations Involved in Marriage

To begin with, marriage givea a man the right of exclusive sexual access
to his wife, whereas a woman has to share her right of sexual access to her
husband with any other wives he might hava. Moro importantly, marriage girzz
s men special rights in the children borne by his wife. ill these children
*re said to be his and belong exclusively and inseparably to hia patrilineal
olaa. in the event of separation or divoroe*when a man'a young children go
with his wife to live elsewhere, whether with one of her relations or with a
new husband, the children remain memcers of their father* a olan.' A woman has

all the children she bears, whoever their father(s) might be. These
children are said to be hers, but do not belong to her clan. As we will see
both a man and a woman have rights in the bridewalthe of their
ughters, sad both are responsible for providing their sons with livestock so

get married and begin a new domestic unit.

Carriage marcnes a couple mutually responsible for their joint and separate
"wxrare. Above all it obliges the man to provide his wife irith
to milk and
land to cultivate. and to contribute his agricultural
their mutual benefit. fn a rmn*a part rhe ebliered to psewJda
x agricultural and domestic labour and, if possible, acquire the use of scat
\(^tbs\) land owned by her kin (her parents and other metrilateral and patrilateral
vations)\(^*\) \text{In addition she is also expected to produce children: an}
\(^ggtial\) source of labour to the household.

Xn order to remain Married a nan is obliged to pay at least some of the
\(tideesalth\) his affines ask of him whenever he is able to do so. Bridewealth
should be paid in stock, but among the agriculturists, it can also be paid in
the for* of gifts, such as blankets, shoes, money or grain. Whatever the case,
and his wife are obliged to provide his affines with agricultural
aistance and the use of some of their land^ should either be requested.

3. Marriage Prohibitions and Preferences

The first considerations of a suitor's eligibility concern his age set and
kinship relations, rules about which are adhered to quite strictly. Fathers
of the same age set (or pun) cannot marry each other's daughters. Marriage is
not allowed between members of the same patrilineal clan. Furthermore, an
Individual (man or woman) may not marry members of hla/hcr mother's brothers'
patrilineage or hia/her father's sisters' sons' patrilineage. Marriage is not
prohibited, but at the same time it is not considered desirable^with members of
\(^*\) Peraon'a father's mother's brothers' patrilineage or father's father's
\(^iatera'\) sons' patrilineage. Marriage is not only allowed, but actually
\(^*\)ferred, however, with members of a person's father's father's mother's
\(^'\)thers' patrilineage and father's father's sisters' sons'
\(^trilineage\). In short, the ideal marriage is said to be between two
\(^rlineage\)es where there was a successful marriage at least three generations

\(^*\) Preferred or preferred as marriage partners:-
Marriage is rarely allowed with members of an individual's FFZS's patrilineage or FNB's patrilineage, but may take place if an alternative spouse cannot be found. Finally, it is not considered right for a man to take more than one wife from any one patrilineage.

One effect of these marriage prohibitions and positive and negative triage preferences, is to create a well defined network of kin for each individual. It is interesting to note that the regulations concerning the *allocation of bridewealth, also define and help to maintain the same network as will be seen below.

Once the eligibility of a prospective groom has been established, other *tor* are then taken into consideration. A common response given by men and when asked what they look for in a groom, is kot, meaning "mouth", and that a * should have a good character and be able to act and speak Public. However, in reviewing the negotiations I have attended, the * preferred considerations as to have been trcr.lth and residence. A ten accepts the suitor who osa pay the highest amount of bridewealth
him daughter. This may be outweighed, however, by other factors such as the desire to have at least one of their daughters living close by.

focal reason for wanting such proximity is so that they can have use
j land belonging to their son-in-law Ind, in the majority of oases, so they ^ benefit from the labour of both their daughter and son-in-law as they ^ bias grow old. From the suitor's point of view, the reverse of this may ^ important if, for example, he does not have enough land of his own.
^though a man always has access to the land of his patrilineage, he has many port options open to him by being and staying married. He does not, for example, have the right to cultivate land he has begged from his wife's relations if their marriage breaks up. As a result, it is often advantageous for either, or both, parties if the marriage takes place between relatively close neighbourhoods, especially if these areas encompass at least two different ecological tones which produce harvests at different times of the year. In iatuw, almost half of the wives came from nearby neighbourhoods and cultivated land belonging to their own parents as well as that belonging to their husbands.

Through the giving of brides and, conversely, the payment of bridewealth, triage establishes long-term commitments and obligations between two extended families and, in a broader sense, between two korok; neighbourhoods. Because of ru^esa of exogamy and the fact that patrilineages, or sections of patricians, *rt ^a* therapist, men have to seek wives from outside their own neighbourhoods. As * have seen, many men marry women from nearby neighbourhoods which has advantages for fc, fu parties. The Timber of patricians local women oame from is thus llarif which increases the kinship tie and relations found within and between neighbourhoods.

Prohibited degrees of marriage are quickly reached in one's own neighbourhood, and eventually between close neighbourhoods. When ^ Una.-
children are born.

The fact that it usually takes a man a long time to pay off his bridewealth for other reasons, has the effect of strengthening the alliance of his kin and that of his wife. The outstanding debt keeps the man and his kin obliged to his wife's kin and, therefore, willing to help them should the alter be in need. As long as good relations exist, and some bridewealth has been paid, the wife's kin, in turn, are sore willing to help their son-in-law and his parents will eventually be made.

Marriage negotiations are normally initiated by a prospective groom and/or his family. In one of the ten marriage negotiations which I recorded in depth, there was an interesting reversal of this approach, when a father made a direct approach to the man he considered would be the most suitable husband for his daughter. In most cases negotiation for a girl's marriage begins as she shows signs of reaching puberty, one or two years before she goes through Initiation (between the ages of 10 and 15). A man's first marriage is negotiated after he has completed initiation, when he has acquired sufficient livestock and/or money to be able to offer an initial bridewealth instalment (when he is between the ages of 15 and 30). Whereas most girls get married soon after their initiation, most men marry five or more years after their Elation.3

When initiating marriage negotiations, a suitor will brew beer (approximately Shs.50 worth) and he and his close male relations and neighbours will this to the home of the girl he wishes to marry. Negotiations are usually lcDg drawn out drunken affairs. In the Katuv region it appeared that it was partially because of people's desire to drink, that the emciat of was not decided until beer had been brought between eight to ten the home of the proposed afflnes. Marriage negotiations often amount to expense for the suitor, especially as he can bring beer to a home as for times before he is clearly and finally refused, and then has to
iti*- bringing beer to another home. In most oases the actual negotiations finally carried out by the fathers of the prospective bride and groom, although other patrilateral relations are also involved. If the father of the party is not alive, a senior meeker of his patrilineage (preferably the father’s brother) should represent him at the discussions. Usually the occasion when matrilateral relations are involved is at the marriage negotiations of the last-born daughter, when the mother’s brothers have the right to claim all the bridewealth. Although the mother and bride, and their close women neighbours, are present at the negotiations, they are supposed to remain quiet and let the main public agreement be arrived at by men.

At Bay one time there are more eligible bachelors looking for wives than available uninitiated girls. This means that the wife-givers usually have a number of suitors to choose from and are in a better bargaining position than are the suitors.

C(i). A woman’s influence in negotiations

Although it may appear from the public negotiation sessions that men arrange and control the marriage agreements, this is definitely not the case. Mothers have a strong say in who may be chosen to marry their children, especially their daughters. The control and influence of a mother and daughter, whether individually or in cooperation, is not articulated and fitted publicly. Privately it is recognized and generally accepted, however, that if a mother and/or daughter do not agree with the father’s choice, the marriage will not be successful. A mother’s private influence over her husband and daughter is also generally recognized and regarded as important in the negotiations. This is borne out by the fact that a bachelor will approach the girl’s mother and try to persuade her in his favour by her token gifts or money. If he succeeds it is understood that she, in turn, will try to persuade her husband, thereby enhancing his chances of

It is also known that, should the father go completely against his choice, she will surreptitiously cajole her daughter to get rid of the
**nired husband when the daughter rune baok to her parental hone after

* **other’s influence over her daughter is also extremely strong, and
m$ use her influence to persuade her daughter to agree with her ohoioe of
% citable spouse e r a if this goes against her daughter’s wishes* A mother’s
^fluence over her daughter stems from the olose contact they hare with each
&#34;th<r* Throughout her daughter’s childhood, a mother teaches her daughter
the agricultural and domestic tasks she should know, and they work together
, e these tasks as long as the daughter remains at home. Through this process,
mother also builds up her authority with respect to her daughter, and has a
grat deal of Influence over her. This influence plus that of other women in
the neighbourhood, are expressed and reinforced through the oercnones of
venen’s initiation, as we shall see in Chapter T.

A mother’s influence over the negotiations of her son’s marriage is not as
itrocg as it is over the negotiations of her dau^iter’s marriage. However,
omen often have a considerable influence over their husband’s choice of
daughter-in-law, by providing information about any girl in question. Out of
all her sons, a mother has the strongest influence over the marriage of her
laat born. Because the last bom son inherits the largest portion of his
•other’s property, the bulk of the bridewealth payments are made from his
•other’s stock. In the words of KokoSiaatia, "If my child (the last bom son)
decided to Just go by himself (i.e. decides to go with his male relations and
•ttl« the negotiations independently of her wishes), if I do not give out the
lto<*, what will he do?".

Mother iaportant aapeot of a woman’s influence over the success of her

1 Carriage, is her role as a mother-in-law. If a woman does not agree with
** ^abend’s choice of a daughter-in-law she can make things extremely
^ ^ t for her son and his wife. The mother and daughter-in-law have to
* tother on a daily basis doing many subsistence tasks for the honestead.
14 th. recognized fact that the mother-in-law is in the position of authority
^mestead, and she can oause endless trouble for tho ac^ ^irc c^i/o*
her influence over her eon to cause discord between the newly married

in uninitiated girl has little chance of influencing the outcome of the negotiation as regards her own marriage. She may, and frequently will, however, cause a great deal of trouble once she has been brought to her husband’s home, if she does not want to remain his wife (the ways in which a woman can get out of marriage are examined in the last section of this chapter)

On the part of a prospective groom, he can terminate negotiations whenever he wishes. This is what one man did, for example, when he came to discover that his prospective father-in-law was a "person of stomach"; a greedy person who tried to get as much as possible from his daughter’s various suitors*

D. Marriage by Capture and Slopement

Marriage by capture, kichutot; to pull, or be pulled, occurs when a man decides to enlist the help of a group of friends from his neighbourhood, to go and take a woman, by force, from another neighbourhood with the intention of making her his wife.

Marriage by capture usually occurs at a large public ceremony where more than one community is involved. It is always pre-arranged, sometimes between the abductors only, sometimes between the abductors and the mszmn’s defenders, and sometimes even with the woman herself. Although marriage by capture is sanctioned by the oaaaunity, the woman will always scream and put up a struggle, no matter what the previous arrangements may have been, as it is considered shameful if the bridewealth negotiations have not been concluded prior to the transition of a wocan to her future husband’s home.

The actual ‘capturing’ happens very quickly. The woman is usually picked ha* subdued, she walks the rest of the way to the groom’s home, flanked by the group of his men friends from the neighbourhood. When she arrives there, the c—•

K-oo: s Bother should promise her a goat to persuade her to enter the hut, another goat to persuade her to eat. If these promises are made they will
assist the groom's family in negotiating the woman to stay. These praises would also be held in the groom's favour at the eventual, later, stages of negotiating with her parents. However, it must be taken into account, that marriages by capture is the forcible abduction of a woman and, on occasion, she *forced into the groom's hut.*

According to Pokot men, the groom and his neighbours have the right to keep the woman at the hut for at least two to three days, unless her parents come to retrieve her, in which event she must be released. If the groom manages to make her stay with him, then he should brew beer as quickly as possible and take it to her parents' home within a few weeks. At this point, the agreement between the two families about the amount of bridewealth is usually settled quickly. In the majority of such cases, the agreement involves a promise from the groom's family that they will pay bridewealth at a later stage, after the couple have stayed together and produced children.

The amount of 'force' used to keep a captured woman at the hut of the groom, is not much greater than the normal guarding of a new wife when she is brought to her husband's home after the completion of bridewealth negotiations. A woman can almost always manage to run away if she has a violent dislike for the san. If she does run away to her parental home, her parents will probably not assist the groom because there has been no previous agreement made between them. However, in some cases, bridewealth negotiations begin when the groom goes to retrieve the woman he captured. If an agreement can be reached as a result of such negotiations between the two families, then the groom may later "take his wife home*".

A woman's first marriage rarely takes the form of marriage by capture, in fact out of the ten cases of marriage by capture recorded in Katuw over a period of about two years, all the women concerned were either widows; had run from a previous husband; or had been 'ohased' away by a previous husband, men involved were all older men who had tried to obtain wives before, or were seeking second wives.
Carriage by capture is recognized as an alternative form of carriage by Pokot. It seems to be retorted to by two opposite categories of men; who are poor or feeble and unable to get wives by negotiation, and those are wealthy and/or very able and can afford to have more than one wife. Meter, it is Important to realize that marriage by capture often takes place go the spur of the mount as a spontaneous decision, mainly because an existing woman happens to be in the area at the time (visiting her parents, at a railway, etc.). Hen appear to take the chance of capturing a woman as a means of obtaining a wife quickly. If after capturing a woman there are no immediate protests from her relations, then the couple is considered married as long as the man takes some beer to his affinities thereby confirming his latentions. Men usually capture women who have previously been married, because by the time most girls go through initiation and are able to marry, their marriages have already been negotiated and agreed upon. In this way marriage by capture helps to balance the discrepancy between the number of eligible brides and bachelors, and also assures that almost all Pokot are married and thus continue to produce children for their husbands.

Elopement is another form of alternative marriage, and is used instead of marriage by capture if the couple decide themselves that they want to marry other. Such a course of action is usually kept secret between a woman lover, with the possible involvement of a few accomplices. I only recorded four cases of elopement, or attempted elopement, while in the field. However, as elopement is often a short-lived affair, it may well have been part of various women's marriage history which they neglected to describe. Out of cases of elopement I recorded, three were successful: two in which the man had the support of a parent, and the other where a man eloped with his wife after she had been staying with her parents, who had meanwhile agreed to another man marry her.

Parent often occur when a woman attempts to elope with her lover on the completion of the first stage of her initiation. If the couple
riage to get m j, the man will have to faoe the woman's parents atoat
ately* In most oases, the very next morning the woman's father will
rith a group of his male relations with the intention of taking his
dughter away by force. It is extremely unlikely that the prospective groom
it this point could persuade her father to let him stay 'married' to his
daughter. Only if doubts had been raised during previous bridewealth
ations about the suitability of another suitor, or if the daughter had
pressed a violent dislike for another suitor chosen by her parents and had
ed continually to run away until she was allowed to stay with her lover, is
it lively that the father would allow the couple to stay together.

Elopement is very similar to marriage by capture, save that the woman
decides with the man about the course of action and goes with him eagerly and
tively, and therefore with no need to
scream and struggle. Because the
woman agrees to go with the man, there is no necessity to persuade her with
promises of gifts of stock to enter the hut or take food. Nevertheless, the
groom's family will often perform the normal carriage custcss as a means of
showing their support for and welcoming the 'bride'. Whether the woman's
father retrieves her or not, her prospective husband must bring beer to the
bone of her parents a short time after elopement. Negotiations then take
place and, once an agreement has been reached between the two families, the
couple are considered to be legally married.

*agency and Distribution of Bridewealth

The Pokot

perceive the payment of bridewealth as a long term payment of a
overtime debt. They often ompare the exchange of bridewealth to a tulia
age, in which a close bond is formed between two men when one of them gives
other a steer in exchange for a cow; because of the greater value of the
Cow \b
- me receiver remain indebted to the original owner, and eventually his
-as long as the cow has reproduced), and repays him with a number of
* and goats over the years. People often say that a woman is like a
tola oow and the bridewealth paid is comparable to the goats and calves the
took associate mat pay after hia tulia cow haj reproduced. Aa this analogy jpdlestss, Pokot associate bridewaalth principally with a woman's ability to gðuaa children. The payment of bridewaalth also confirms a man's right ^jr the labour contribution of his wife and their children. Another aspeot men women emphasise as being isq)ortant, is that the payment of bridewaalth I, a nooessary reimbursement to a woman's parental family for haying "fed" their jioghter over the yes^s, as well as being a kind of compensation for the loss of insistence labourer to that family.

The actual payment and eventual distribution of bridewaalth,confirms an acceptance of socio-economic obligation and commitment between the two kin groups involved, and by extension between the kin groups within, and between, two different neighbourhoods. The reality of how much bridewaalth is paid, and to whom and when it is distributed, depends on the socio-economic actualities of each family and there is a great deal of variation from oase to ease. Although a high brldewealth which includes large livestock is preferred,, the total amount of bridewaalth is open to negotiation and is not fixci cr governed by a particular Ideal. There is, however, a clearly articulated ideal about how the payment and diatribution of bridewaalth should be made. Ibis is as follows: Tha initial payment should be when the groom comes to his bride heme. At this time the groan should bring one ox for tho father of the bride, and one cow with a suckling calf for the mother of the ride to that she does not feel "sad in her atcmach at the loaa of a daughter". 8

The next instalment of the bridewaalth should be sfede after the ouple's '^st child has been born^and before the next child has been conceived. This t*laent may be shared out by the bride's father among hia brothers and half-'othera (sons of his father by other wives). Further instalments should ^inau to be stade over the years until about three-quarters of the original '•^-upoi amount has been reached. The bride's family will usually cease to further bridewaalth at this point, especially if relations between the P*®Hiea are positive and if the groom has provided economic assistance and
ppart vhen kia ixv-lawa vented or needed thai*

Bridevealth received for the last born daughter should go to her Mother's the?** ie in pert reoprooated when a small portion of bridevealth
\^tird by the mother's brother for his own daughters is given to his sister. o fact, in Kapenguria it is obligatory that one female goat be given to the other's sister whenever her brothers' daughters marry. Hence, when a woman's daughters get Married a significant portion of their bridevealth goes to her pothers, and when her brothers' daughters get married she, in turn, receives a ^sll portion of their bridevealth. The transfer of their daughters' bridevealth between a brother and sister underwrites the prohibition on aaxriage between their children. Should a girl be married to her aother's brother's son, then her mother's brother would not only have to help his son provide bridevealth, but would also have the right to receive part of that bridevealth. This contradiction is avoided when such a marriage is prohibited.

If a couple has many daughters, almost all the bridevealth they receive for the first two or three daughters will be tslt by their parents, while a portion of each of the remaining daughters' bridevealth is shared among their father's brothers, mother's brothers and father's sisters. If a family has only two daughters, the whole of the second daughter's bridevealth should go to her mother's brothers. If a family has only one daughter, half the bridevealth should go to her permits, while the remainder should be evenly divided between her mother's brothers and father's brothers.

Bridevealth payments are not directly received by, or distributed among, the brothers of a bride. A man benefits from his sisters' bridevealth only in ** contemplating marriage or, on inheritance, when they die. This is •"Prized by a strictly adhered to taboo which prohibits the particular stock received for a daughter's bridevealth, from being used for the payment of a 8 orinewealih: only the offspring of this stock can be used, or other
f an speaking about bridewealth distribution, the Pokot say that, if all
.took reoired through bridewealth payments remains in one ham, the stock
j oot surrire. Furthermore, they say that portions of bridewealth should be
to "good" relatives, or to relatives who hare "helped", implying those kin
were actually given stock, or oash, through the years. Frequently a Pokot
ft* jg| n°t Ss® brother, or Aa/"-brother, s portion of the bridewealth
nc»iv»d for the marriage of his daughter, unless he has reoired, or oan
MGC*bl7 expect to reoire, a portion of the bridewealth from that brother's
jff^titer in return. There are, of course, other occasions when a brother
ifeguld make an economic contribution to his brother's family, which should in
tum entitle him to a portion of his brother's daughter's bridewealth. For
instance, he should contribute stock, or land, to his brother's wife when her
turtm is tied on; he should give stock to his brother's sons and daughters
after their initiation at kiyul; he could hare "helped" in tens of stock for
etreaoaies, or fines, from the time when his brother waa first aurried.

The obligation to give the mother's brothers at least some of the bride-
wealth is more obsssute. The mother's brothers should oemtribute to the
nicus ceraaonies which directly involve the daughters of their sister, such as
rlooi, or at the different stages of initiation. Even if the mother's brothers
do not fuiil all of these obligations, they will reoeive a fairly large portion
the bridewealth payment, in Katuw particularly, for the last bora daughter,
eister's daughters should also be able to obtain assistance, in the form of
bth stock and land, from their mother's brothers whenever such assistance be-
necessary.

Practice, wife-givers exert pressure on the wife-receivers to pay as
bridewealth as possible in the early stage of marriage. Where a father
Bot Reived any bridewealth, or only a very small portion of it, he will,
his daugh er has given birth to a child and has Just again conceive" or
*** to, request her to come and stay at his home. At this point the
parents are in a stronger position to demand a further bridewcilLU
btoaust their daughter's marriage is that much more secure. Their

oughtar, haring produced a child, is unlikely to run off with another man, fhils their son-in-law will probably want to keep his wife, especially as she ^ proved that she can successfully bear him children. The young married ooupl also have had time to realise that, if they can build a relationship of cooperation with each other, they can also establish a prosperous doaestio unit which, in the long run, will be to their considerable jirantagf.

Generally, the daughter will not put up any resistance to her parents’ request to stay at home until further bridewealth is paid. It will be to her om advantage later, if the bridewealth is paid, because she can then rely on the network of kin among when some of the stock has been distributed.

Socially, the Pokot would ridicule her if she refused to stay at her parental lime, and she would be openly teased for having no self-respect if she made no effort to ensure that the debt owed to her parents, on her aooount, was not paid because of her refusal to comply with the request to stay at hose.

In a similar sense, after a wife produces four to six children, although the wife-reoeivers’ indebtedness increases, the social pressures on than to pay bridewealth are considerably lessened. The parents of the wife would not "at their daughter to return to their home because of the considerable burden involved in supporting a woman with many children. At the same time, the daughter, herself, would not want to return home because, as an older

the would know that she would not be desirible to another man because

* could not produce aajgr more children. This is another reason why parents

* l»aya endeavour to obtain the bridewealth for their daughter as quickly

M Possible. In the words of P'Katieny, "by not letting the son-in-law feed

**fe for too long".

(n

- Study 1: Complications involved in receiving and paying for bridewealth.

'^Eftieieay i* a relatively poor man. He has fear children; the first and

Cra ^e daughters. When this case study was recorded both daughters
- married, the elder son was married, although not living with his wife,  
the youngest son was planning to start negotiating for a wife,  
the amount of bridewealth agreed at the negotiations for P’Xatieny’a first  
husband was two oxen and one oow. The night when the husband came to take  
his wife, he paid five goats, the equivalent of one ox. P’latieny’a daughter  
got started at her husband’s home, and gave birth to two girls. However, both her  
pregnancies were extremely difficult and required a great deal of ritual and  
jedical attention to keep her alive. Soon after the second child was born,  
P’Jatieny requested his daughter to bring her two children and stay at his home  
until more of the agreed bridewealth was paid. While she was staying at her  
parental home, her husband made attempts to retrieve his wife, but never  
attended to. This was mainly because he could not afford to pay any more of  
the bridewealth he owed, but also was because P’Xatieny, and possibly the  
tsunbend as well, feared the consequences of further difficult pregnancies in  
the future.

P’Kstieny kept his daughter and her children at his home for about four  
years, when another man came to negotiate marriage. During the negotiations  
the amount of six goats, one ox, one oow and a suckling calf, was agreed on.  
P’Katieny let his daughter go to her new husband’s home without any of the  
bridewealth being paid, because the agreement would have to be further ratified  
by the first husband, who was not present at the time of negotiations. It is the  
recorded this case, the second husband had still not paid any of the  
bridewealth, because P’Katieny’a daughter had not given birth to any of his  
children. The first husband had not demanded that P’Katieny pay back the five  
*o&ta he initially received as bridewealth, nor had he demanded any payment  
the second husband.

When bridewealth negotiations for P’Katieny’a second daughter took place,  
L. Vag living with relations in Xapenguria. Because of this, the amount of  
fci^I  
^Ith agreed for her was considerably higher than those described from  
regica. The tciit cgrcod rns five head of o&ttle and ten goats.
figjtlonj was still living in Katuw on the night when his aon-in-law came to his bride home, and brought an initial payment of three head of oattle (tro oon and an oz). For at least five years, the oattle were looked after by the sons of P'Katieny's deceased brother, and they were eventually given one ox.

The ox remained with P'Katiexgr while he gave the oow to his eldest son when married.

Then P'Katieny's second daughter had borne two children he tried to obtain the bridewealth he was owed. However, because of his continual desire to keep his second daughter at his house. He said that if he was not given at least the one oow which, traditionally, should be given for the mother-in-law, he himself would have to give his wife a oow from his own herd. It is of interest that P'Xatieny, in his need for stock, had started pressuring the husband of his sister's daughter to pay him the oz that he was promised during the sister's daughter's bridewealth negotiations. Because his sister's daughter had recently moved to Katuw, and was cultivating P'Katiexgr's land, he was in a strong position to demand that this ox be paid to him.

Bridewealth negotiations for P'Xatieqy's son, Siwareng, were settled soon after both of P'Katieny's daughters were married. Siwareng's bride had been previously married to Lokitai, who had paid a small amount of bridewealth. She had not given birth to Lokitai's children when she returned to her parental tae, where she remained, and because Lokitai never managed to retrieve his stock, her parents opened negotiations with Siwareng. The exact amount of bridewealth was not settled during the negotiations. Instead, P'Katieny and Siwarwg were told to "wait and see the power which Lokitai still has over his house."

Eventually, Lokitai demanded that the small amount of bridewealth he had asked for be returned. However, this was not possible, because the stock received from him had, apparently, already been "ccnsu^ci", that is, either eaten or sold by Lokitai's affines. Soon after, settled in a feasible...
where P'Katieny gave hie affinal relatione She. 100 to gi re to fcital and hla relations. This assistance, pins a few token gifts, was enough bridewealth payment for Siwareng to "take his wife heme".

It the time of Siwareng's marriage, P'Katieny gave the norly married ^ple * cow and an heifer in Kapenguria to begin their domestic unit, 
^B returned to her parental home in Katuw. Her parents dananded that p'Katieny pay at least one more oz for bridewealth, and they were also ^grilling to let their daughter return to her husband in Kapenguria, because they conjectured that was where her eyes had become seriously infected, due to continual olose contact with cattle. P'Katieny oould not afford to pay the ox requested and, as a consequence, Siwareng'a wife stayed at her parental home.

Almost two yeara later, the long process of bridewealth negotiations had begun again. After a number of negotiating sessions, over a period of about eight months, a series of further complications were brought forward. During these two years, Siwareng lost control of 'his' property, because P'Katieny took back 'his' oow until Siwareng would begin living with his wife again. P'Eatieny also considered that Siwareng had mismanaged his herd because he sold the heifer shortly after he married, and P'Katieny therefore decided to resume control. is a consequence, Siwareng did not have any property to pay bride-

2'Xatieny had refused to give up any more cattle, but, since he had become he oould not participate directly in the bridewealth negotiations, he cant that P'Kati eny was reliant on secondhand Information, including that own wifs, who had never liked Siwareng's 'wife', and was continually *Ulng with her. Another major complication was feat P'Katieny would *lter had Siwareng and his wife locking after his cattle in Kapenguria,

** Parents were adamant that the couple should stay in the Katuw region. the cirousstances, the negotiations were conducted by kin living in the malm person involved was P'Kati eny's sister's sen, who oould not
to help Siwareng pay any bridewealth because he was deeply in debt.

Msitera worse, Siwareng had been extremely irresponsible at fulfilling promises he had suide to his In-laws at the negotiating session. Because of this, he had lost the active support of the respected gen of Katuw, who refused to go to negotiating sessions with him.

Nevertheless, an agreement was finally reached and Siwareng promised to pay 10 goats. He planned to get these by selling his father’s tulla ox, though this would put a further strain on their relationship. The transaction was delayed yet again, because, in the meanwhile, the eyes of Siwereng’s wife bid became much worse. Her parents let their daughter stay with Siwareng for six days in the hope that he would find a cure, but he failed. Things had reached a standstill at the time this case was recorded.

f. Repayment of Bridewealth to Terminate Marriage

When a marriage is unsuccessful, it represents a loss for both the kin groups concerned. If a woman returns to her parental home, and has not produced any children by her husband, the husband has the right to demand the return of the bridewealth he paid. If affinal relationships are positive, the bride’s parents will try to persuade their daughter to return to her husband’s home. This is, partially, on account of the difficulty in retrieving the bridewealth which, in most cases, has been distributed already between a variety of kin. However, if all efforts fail, then the bride’s family should return the amount of bridewealth they originally received, excluding the offspring that may have produced.

**It is only when a wife returns to her parental home after producing her children, that the husband should not demand (although some do) that bridewealth be returned. This is partially due to the fact that, the wife has fulfilled her duty as a mother, the husband is expected to be able to fulfill his role and retrieve her, using the full assistance available from his family.**

As well as his parents and relations, to persuade her to go back to his home retrieval will depend on the existence of positive relations.
Another reason why the bridewealth should not be demanded if the husband to retrieve his wife, is that it will be used to oorer the
s of bringing up his ohild and Maintaining his wife. In this
dtion, it may happen that the parents, if they are still alive at the time, fill eventually gain back their loss of not receiving the total bridewealth for their daughter, by receiving a portion of the bridewealth for their grand-daughter. During bridewealth negotiations, the father of the daughter to be ^rried is always closely questioned, and if it is confirmed that he has not tcosicaically supported his 'wife' or daughter over the years, he will receive one female goat from the total bridewealth paid. This goat is for his clan name, which his daughter bears by right, no matter whether her parenta' arriage was successful or not.

ill this is further complicated if, after the bridewealth has been paid, a woman returns to her parental home, with or without her husband's children, and trentually marries another man. If bridewealth negotiations take place with the second husband, he oust be prepared to pay a portion of the bridewealth to the first husband. Hie latter should be present during the negotiations, or oontacted separately, to agree upon this amount. Even if no negotiations take Place with the first husband, the second husband must be prepared to pay coaething eventually to the first husband.

This might turn out to be in the form of a fine for adultery but, if the husband has neglected his wife for a number of years, this becomes likely. However, if the woman produces the ohild of her second husband, ^on?inning their intention of staying together as a married couple, the husband usually exerts his full legal rights to demand that a fine be Paid

If the second husband and his wife take care of the first husband's
ey are considered to be economically responsible for them, and thus Penditures for, and receive the benefits from, those children.
Jastability of Marriages  Divorce and Separation

The first years of a marriage in Pokot are very unstable, as the husband and wife adjust, or fail to adjust, to one another and their new circumstances. So far as the public 'male' ideal is concerned, there are no recognized strategies or alternative ways for women to get out of marriage. As Siwanyang, a young said: "Women have no power when they are taken to their husbands' houses. If they are away, they will be beaten." In practice, however, alternatives (more or less extreme) do exist, and are used.

The most obvious tactic used by a new wife is to run back to her parental home and complain. As already explained, it is approved of, and even advised, that a bride should do this at least once after the fourth day of arrival at her husband's home. Sometimes, however, a woman simply refuses to stay at her husband's home from the minute she is brought there. A new wife who has openly expressed her dislike for her husband, is usually guarded by the women and men of the compound (or possibly close neighbours) for the first few days after her arrival. Nevertheless, she will most often manage to get away more than once, and create a general disturbance through her actions.

There are two recognized actions which a woman can take if she does not want to stay with her husband. Firstly, a woman can climb up a tree. This is ritually very extreme, as it symbolizes that the husband will die at an early age. Secondly, a woman can smear her body with excreta and thereby to make herself so undesirable that her husband will leave her alone. If a woman shows her disapproval of her husband by resorting to either of these actions, her husband should break off the marriage. Let, many husbands persist in the marriage whatever actions their new wives take, which can turn out to be to their own disadvantage in the long run.

It must be remembered that it is not only women who do not choose their "jut also men who do not freely choose their wives. A your-? man is Qt on his parents and close kin to give him the property to pay bride- and, as a result, they have a strong say as to whom he may begin.
But more importantly, marriage is seen as a relationship between two kin groups, and not simply between two individuals. If he had a violent dislike for, as they would probably lose their bridewealth payment if the marriage failed. Although it is far easier for a man to divorce in Pokot than for a woman, legal divorce is extremely rare. A legal divorce is known as kitlakat: to open or unlock (probably referring to the untying of a woman's turum: wedding bracelet). For a man to obtain a formal divorce from his wife he must take the case to kokwo: the neighbourhood council of elders. If the elders agree that a divorce should take place, then the two families are blessed and the division of property is decided by the elders. At kitlakat a man either relinquishes all claim to his bridewealth (if the woman has produced a child), or the elders decide that at least some of the bridewealth must stay with the wife's kin because of the trouble of trying to retrieve it from various relations. It is very difficult for women to obtain legal divorce in Pokot, because they have to persuade their male relation to present their case for them at the council of elders. She may be able to persuade her own kin to do so, but it is more likely that she will be able to convince a lover and his kin to do so, if she has stayed with the lover for an extended period of time.

Kitlakat is only resorted to when it is advantageous for either party, 'roa what I have been told, this only occurs in cases of impotence, if the man or woman has become ill or mad, and possibly if the woman is known to break the taboo of handling food when she is menstruating (I was only told of two cases of kitlakat was supposedly performed, and I do not know of any case of legal divorce which occurred when I was in the field). It is far easier, for both women, to obtain a de facto divorce than a divorce de Jure. Da facto occurs frequently and initially only involves a separation of the either a husband chases his wife from his home, or a wife decides to free her husband. In such cases the legalities of marriage, and the
of property, are left far sore askiralent and can usually be be-
between the two (or three if a second husband is izxrolred) kin groups
(for example, I know of many oases where the husband got back all
j, tfldeaalth from hia affines, even though it should hare remained with thaa
his wife had given birth to hia ohildren).

frzT.g the agriculturists, an Interesting fact is the frequency with which
facto divorce occurs, especially considering the public male ideal whloh
jtf#ses that as wives women have no power and at*y married to their husbands*
...recorded a total of thirty-seven marriage histories in detail, but will
JUcount three of these examples because two were of widows who remarried only
after their husbands had died, and one was of a sterile man whose wives always
laft hia when they discovered they could not produce his ohildren. Out of a
total of thirty-four women exactly half were no laager living with their firat
husbands, while the other half were still living with their first husbands
although there were often difficulties Involved in these marriages.

I will review some of the acre important details of these statistics here,
but it should first be clarified that only two of these marriages are extremely
young, the rest involving women who have, in most cases, produced at least two
children and can therefore be expected to stay with their current husbands*  I
ill not review all the negotiation and bridewealth transactions which have
occurred in these surriagea, but only point out that there is no direct
numeral relation between the amount of bridewealth paid and the stability of the
arrangement. In most cases only small amounts of bridewealth were paid (which 1a
^itt for this particular agricultural area: specifically P'Tokow, Katuw
^'Slaat), and, as is the case throughout the wider Pokot area, bridewealth
J*ento were in no case completed and there was always more due.

us first look at the seventeen women who have stayed with their first
^k^Bda. Prom this total only seven women married their husbands and stayed
*ith tK
without any further complications; all of these men married when
^'y''Z^ and two of these marriages are between men and women who
gt is olear that another man's child is not necessarily seen as a hindrance to
 trood's marriage possibilities. Let us now review a oase example in detail
to aao strategies women can use to get out of unwanted marriages.

0(i). Case Study 2s Woman getting out of a negotiated marriage

The example of ChepoLoyale's successful flight home, enoompaases almost all
of the possible strategies a woman may use if she dislikes her husband. When
Chepo&py° WM still a girl, Lopokoi, a middle aged bachelor, began to
negotiate with her father over her marriage, ChepoLoyale rushed out of the
hat during these negotiations and told her father he should not drink the bear
of Lopokoi because she would never stay with an old man like him. Publioij,
bar parents ignored her outburst. However, ChepoLoyale then became pregnant
before Initiation, and her father agreed to let her marry the lover who had
brought him beer, hoping that she would stay married to a man she did not
dislike.

Uttor completing Initiation, ChepoLoyale went through a difficult
pregnancy, and when she eventually gave birth ih« child ras still-born. It
this point, her father hurriedly reopened negotiations with Lopokoi, telling
hia to bring beer quickly, and to take 'his wife'. While the negotiaticna
and drinking were going on,ChepoLoyale fled. Much later, after a somewhat
drunken search she was finally found near a neighbour's house, up a tree. Her
father's brother managed eventually to persuade her to climb dearo from the tree
nd to re-enter the hut. After another four-hour session of talking to her,
while she sat hidden in the loft, her relations finally persuaded her to
company Lopokoi to his home in Katuw. She only conceded when it was agreed
she could come back home and tell her father if she had any complainta
Lopokoi. With little choice, ChepoLoyale remained subdued on the way
^Pckoi=s house, not even bothering to stop (thereby requesting gifts of
nta tha moment ChepoLoyale arrived at Lopokoi's home, he and his
Plots Bade an effort to keep a close guard on her in case she ran away.
second day, when she pretended that she needed to go outside to ipiti, she escaped. Lopokoi went to search for her on his own, but could not find her. Everyone suspected that she had gone to her ex-lover’s home in Sisomo negotiations were still not completed, but Lopokoi did not bring beer to I<o7>l<o7> kene as promised, because he had no idea where ‘his wife’ was.

After ChepoLoyale had returned to her parents’ home, however, Lopokoi opened negotiations. After realising that her father was prepared to satiate again with Lopokoi, ChepoLoyale went to Sigor on market day and ran gray. That evening Lopokoi began the search for ‘his wife’* Even though he spent one day looking for her in Sigor, and continued his search the next day with the aid of Loyale’s wife, he was still unsuccessful. ChepoLoyale, however, found no place where she could stay, nor any means of leaving the area, and by the following night she sheepishly returned to her parents’ home. In the morning her restests gave her strong advice, and immediately sent for Lopokoi to come and finally take ‘his wife’ home. That afternoon, ChepoLoyale, subdued once again, went with Lopokoi to his home.

In the middle of the night, Lopokoi could be heard shouting directions towards the hills to the young men of Katuw who were in hot pursuit after Lopokoi’s run-away-wife. ChepoLoyale had run straight back to her parents’ this time, in the hope that now she would be able to persuade them to let her stay. However, she was disappointed, and the next day when Lopokoi arrived with a group of men, they took her by force from Loyale’s home. Her other had helped them find her and, before they left, she told her daughter she never wanted to see her again.

The following day, while ChepoLoyale was in the house and Lopokoi was just ahe smeared herself with her own excreta. On discovering this, *Ued his brother.

and they talked and laughed about what she had done. ** the tado Lopokoi’s brother simply took her down to the river, washed her a. i «na »aid, •when you have my brother’s child, will you not get the of the child on you?".
paring ChepoLoyale’s stay, Lopokoi had to work at all the household tasks, *ho was ^ia heno, closely guarded. Two days later, while Ifipokoi was at the river fetching water, she quickly dashed outside and, again, globed up into a tree. When Lopokoi returned he threatened to beat her and globed up to get her down. As soon as ChepoLoyale saw him coming near, she fell out of the tree, possibly on purpose. This resulted in her suffering ^ious aches and pains, including a very swollen foot and backache. Everyone then thought that there was now no way that she could run anywhere for some time. The next day she proved everyone wrong, escaping again in the middle of the night. Lopokoi and his neighbours spent the next two days looking for *his wife* without success. He went to Loyale’s house, and asked him to report immediately if she had been found.

After about a week she returned to her parents’ home. By now she had definitely made her point to everyone in the community that she had no intention of ever staying with Lopokoi, no matter how many times she was forcibly taken there and had to run away. Lopokoi discontinued negotiations, but he still quarrelled violently with other men who were seen with *his wife*, and, when this case was recorded, he was still keeping his claim on ChepoLoyale by refusing to return her skin skirt and her beads. Loyale became very angry about this, as he believed that Lopokoi could easily bewitch his daughter while he had these personal effects in his possession. However, Lopokoi had his reason: he was demanding that Loyale return the Sha 370 he had spent on beer.

As this case study shows, ChepoLoyale had no support from either her ather or father but, in spite of this, she was finally able to get her own way *r resorting to every course of protest open to her. Other cases, either *rrUge by capture or difficult marriages, are always easier for a woman to *olve if she has the support of her own kin.
Acquisition of and Bighta over Property

The section is concerned with the ways in which men and women acquire livestock and land, and the different rights they have in their own and their property and its products (such as grain, milk, and meat). The decisions in the domestic unit over the use and disposal of curses, and how, will also be discussed at length. Finally, the concept of ownership itself is considered from the differing perspectives of men and women.

There are a number of different occasions in the life of a man or woman when he or she is promised, or directly given livestock or land. When a person promised stock or land they have the right to claim it at a future date, livestock can also be acquired through exchange and, of course, through the reproduction of existing stock. To begin with, let us look at how and when a man acquires livestock and land, or the promise of these.

1. Acquisition of Livestock and Land by a Man

A young man is first promised stock by his close relatives when he is blessed at klyul after completing initiation and when he is allowed to see his close female kin for the first time. From initiation onwards, young men slowly begin to accumulate property over which they obtain full ownership rights only when they marry (usually five to seven years later). Until a man is married, his father has ultimate control over his livestock. If, however, a young marriage breaks up, a father may still confiscate his son's stock (as have seen P'Katieny do in Case Study 1 above). It is only when a man

his own household, particularly once a man moves with his wife to his own home near by, that he finally gains full ownership rights and control over his livestock.

An unmarried man may further accumulate livestock in the following ways:

father may introduce his son to one of his tulia stock associates,

designating his son to carry on that association in the future. A man with the help of his father, will probably start a tulia relationship when he does aapara. An unmarried man will also try to purchase his
irestock through the sale of maixe or beer, or possibly with money from employment. Alternatively, he may earn a goat or sheep by special tasks, such as burying a close relation.

Then a man wants to marry, most of his stock will be used to meet the
- obtaining a wife; both in the cost involved in brewing beer for negotiations, as well as to complete the initial bridewealth payment,
- goats of an unmarried man may also be needed for other reasons, such as the payment of a fine for wrong-doing. Taking these factors into account, plus the natural reproduction and mortality rates of livestock, a man in Katuw will most probably own only two or three goats at the time of his marriage.

Once a man is married and brings his wife to his home, his father and another divide their herd, separating their own stock from that of their son. Aside from the two or three goats or sheep which belong to their son, the parents will give him and their daughter-in-law additional goats on account of their future children. The father may simply tell his son and daughter-in-law which stock belongs to them, but in some areas the father will mark their stock with dung. A horizontal line smeared along the flank of a goat, sheep, or cow, signifies that the animal belongs to the son and his wife alone, while a crossed line signifies that the offspring of that animal are to be shared eventually with his other sons and their wives. Some of this stock will have been promised already to the daughter-in-law on the night she was taken from parental home. The rest will belong to the son.

After marriage, a man also gains full ownership rights and control over
- piece of land his father gave him and which he cultivated as a young
  single man. If this is particularly small (about quarter of an acre), his
  father or mother will probably give additional land to their son at the
  beginning of the next cultivation period (perhaps a further half acre).

B. Acquisition of Livestock and Land by a Woman

The first time a woman is promised livestock from her close relatives is
when she is blessed (at kiyul) after completing initiation, when she is allowed
her relative for the first time. The next occasion when a girl is promised livestock is on the night she is taken as a bride from her natal home, when she is first promised livestock by her own parents and later by the relatives of her husband. Before leaving her parents' home, the girl is dressed in the special ornaments she wore at initiation (some of which belong to her mother). The groom and his group stage a mock attack outside the hut door, demonstrating their determination to take her wife. When the bride is restless, she comes out of the hut and is welcomed with shouts of joy and excitement. Before the bridal party leaves, the couple is blessed (kiyul) by the bride's parents who spill drops of milk on their forehead. As part of the blessing they also tell their daughter that if she follows their advice and stays with this man who they have approved as her husband, they will give her a female goat or cow. The blessing serves as a final ritual statement that the parents and their relatives are now giving their daughter away, and thereby expect the wife-receiver to uphold their part of the agreement and to pay, over time, the agreed-upon bridewealth.

From each of these promises, that after initiation and that upon marriage, women usually ask for and receive only one gift of livestock (in Katuw usually one female goat) from their parental home. In most cases a daughter would only ask for additional livestock from her parental home, and that of her mother's and father's brothers, "in times of hunger", when there is insufficient food or livestock at her husband's home.

After the blessing, in the middle of the night, the groom and his group of ten end female relations take the bride to her new home. Every so often, the way, the bride stops and can only be persuaded to continue by a je of a sheep or a goat. When the bride stops, her husband or one of his relations describes in detail the stock they are promising to give her:

Vou tend (and go) by the white and black female goat ("which is) now in mj  

Such promises of livestock must be made each time the bride stops. A 'milk tree' (a tree with a whitish sap, of which there are four
t in the Chrsngsn foothills); a tree with a beehive hanging
a Junction of paths when the other leads to another hose; before

ing a river; and, before irrigating an irrigation channel,

then finally she reaches her husband's family home, the bride stops again,
gust be promised more stock before she enters the livestock enclosure, and
before she enters her mother-in-law's hut. It this point the mother-in-
egg should make promises of stock to persuade the bride to "save her sendit"
(a ritual atik she has kept since her initiation, which she 'saves' by putting
It in the thatch roof of her mother-in-law's hut); to sit down; and, finally,
to eat.

Pokot women say that when men are initiated they learn about the customs
of the country and how to oheat women over their promised goats. Out of all
the goats or sheep that a new wife is promised in Katuw, she will receive at
east only two. The two most commonly given are; one for entering the but of her
mother-in-law and 'saving' her sendit and; one for eating her first food there*
Both these goats are promised to the bride by her mother-in-law from whose herd
they are taken, as distinct from the father-in-law's herd.

The night the husband takes his bride to his own house she demands, and is
promised, more stock. It is with these promises of stock that he persuades
her to have sexual intercourse with him for the first time, which, according to
the social ideal, should be the first time she has had sex since her initiation.

The bride will refuse to move until promised a goat for closing the door,
• Bother for coming to the bed, and finally a female goat or a cow for removing
er • dirt and consenting to have sexual intercourse. This last animal is the
o gift of stock she demands to see, instead of simply accepting a verbal
teniae.

She following morning the father end mother, as described above, designate
eat of the stock which will belong, henceforth, to their son and daughter-
is ip-

People say that long ago noslo was performed that afternoon, but
r^ys it is often delayed for as long as eight years. Noslo is the last

-73
m marriage', by which the new wife is publicly recognised and accepted
g by the community. The most significant rite of the nosio ceremony is
froT* old neighbourhood inside the serried ouppla's hut, 
gfell* women wait outside. The men chant songs and bleaa the newly-wed
pie by enacting scenes which represent a prosperous household* The new
rffi is then oalled and given strong advice by one of the elders. He warns
that she must now obey her husband, and not try to run away with a former
lorar, emphasizing this latter point by threatening that the elders of the
slgbbourhood will curse any former lover who may pursue her now that she is a
juried woman.

ifterwards the new wife is told to sit on a akin next to her husband's
iloae klnwnmi (usually his brother) so that he can twist her turum: a wedding
bracelet made from a long strip of leather worn on her wrist. The husband's
brother can only be persuaded to oomplete the wedding bracelet if the new wife
is promised gifts of land or livestock from her husband and his kin. In this
way approximately eight promises are pledged before the bracelet la finished.
?or a woman*a turum, two promises are said to be more important than the others,
and each ahoould, therefore, be a large gift, such as a female oow. One of
these is for the tying of the last knot and the other is promised after the
form; ia completed and she is blessed by her father-in-law.

Of the stock promised for turum, a woman of Katuw will actually receive
only about two female goata or aheep. These usually include the one which her
ther-in-law promised when he blessed her, and an additional goat or aheep
raised by her husband or his close kinsman, such aa his brother. If, in
Je*rs to
come, the wife desperationy "needs" stock, she can go and aak one of
toisband'a relations, who had promised her stock for turum taking him some
eller In most cases, the person will then give her the stock he had promised,
A 
* great deal will depend upon the prosperity of his own herd at that
ular time.
omen receive, and usually use, all the land they are premised for turum.
M** mount to — lend In different eoo-
ftjid, over the years, a woman and her children will use these different
land at different times, leaving some land fallow while they

**the remainder**

*ty way of a summary, the amount of stock a wife in the Katuw area
received immediately upon marriage is, typically, three female goats and/or
two from her mother-in-law, and one from her husband. Later, she

*inHtdt*

receive two more stock for turum; one from her husband, and one from her
mother-in-law. At this time she also receives, but may not necessarily use
adiately, three or four pieces of land from both close and distant relatives
of her husband. Apart from the total of five (usually all female) goats and/or

g-eof a woman has received upon marriage, a woman has a reserve of at least
three goats and/or sheep which she can ask for in "times of need"*

Tables I and II (see end of chapter) summarize the usual sources of

property for a man and woman in Katuw, and the usual number of livestock and
pieces of land acquired from these sources. However, it must be remembered
that there is a great deal of variation in the amount of property with which
a couple establishes their household, as it depends largely on the wealth of
the husband and his kin.

C. Legal Rights in Property

It is evident from the foregoing account that, at the beginning of their
married life, a wife is most likely to have been given and promised more land
and stock than her husband. *From this,* one might expect a woman to be in a
more powerful position than her husband as regards the economic affairs of

*ir domestic unit. However, although a woman receives more property than a

*band, she does not have full ownership rights in this property, and

*ight to dispose of property outside the domestic unit lies almost

*irely with her husband. Essentially, a woman only has usufruct rights in

*land and stock she has been Tiven, plus the right to transmit her property
to her

children and daughters-in-law, either upon their marriages or as

**itance after her own death.
lurried men, on the other hand, have full ownership rights in their own livestock, for they not only have usufruct rights and the right to transfer their property to their children, but they also have the right to dispose of their livestock as they wish through exchange, and to meet various social and ritual obligations such as payment of fines; gifts to stock associates; bridewealth instalments; contribution to public ceremonies; etc.

Furthermore, a man's right to dispose of stock in exchange also extends to his livestock. However, a husband's right over his wife's livestock is limited in a number of ways (discussed in detail in the next section).

In the case of grain and milk, rights are similarly divided between men and women. Milk, and the subsistence crops of maize and millet, are managed and distributed on a day to day basis by women. These crops, as well as milk, are said to be for "feeding the mother and her children". Only a woman is supposed to open the grain store, and her husband or male relations are expected to ask her if they wish to obtain grain in order to make it into beer, soil it, or exchange it for stock. Once the subsistence needs of the household are taken care of, the husband has the right to use the grain as he wishes. When a substantial crop is produced which is clearly beyond the subsistence needs of the domestic unit, a man will build his own separate store to which he has free access (this often happens when the children have grown up, or if a man has two wives and he works on his own separate field in addition to those of his wives).

The one occasion when a woman will not hesitate to claim her legal rights over grain, and especially over her stock, is if her husband attempts to take grain and/or a large number of her stock, in order to marry, or to use for, her wife. She will then take her husband to council, stating her case to a male spokesman, usually a close relation such as her son, her brother, or her husband. When a woman's husband decides to marry another wife, he will give stock to the new wife upon marriage. It is up to a wife to decide
which, stock she will give to a new wife. Her decision will
be based on the size of her herd, the number of her sons, and on her relationship
with her husband (in Katuw, she will probably not give away more than two or
three). A wife does not share the land she was given for
her husbands use it for the daily unit of her new wife. This also
implies to inheritance, in that the husband, and/or the sons of one wife, have
rights over the allocated herd of another wife, even if she has no sons.

The rights a woman has in land and stock are altered if she separates or
gets divorced from her husband. Should a woman return to her parental home,
she cannot take any of her stock with her. However, if she separates from
her husband, and takes their children with her, the sons have the right to ask
for their mother's property in the future. Sometimes, albeit rarely, the
father will then give his sons one female goat. The only way a son can
receive more of his mother's property is if he stays and lives with his father,
rather than going with his mother to her parental home. Normally, this could
only happen if the son is at least four to five years old when his parents
separate. In most cases, younger children (up to the age of four) go to live
with their mother. If the couple have been formally divorced, then the
division of property is decided on by the council of elders, but, once the
kridewealth has been returned, a woman has no further claim on 'her' stock.

Even if their parents are separated, both sons and daughters can
cultivate the land given to their mother at tunas. In some cases, even the
herself will return to cultivate her land at her husband's home,
though she must have given birth to his children, and thus be using the crop
to thea. However, the children cannot inherit, and thereby own, their
8 pruua land if their parents have separated. They definitely do have
usufruct rights, which can be extended to their children's children and so on for any generations, but only for as long as the relationship between the two remains positive, end if there is not a problem of land scarcity.

Management and Control of Resources in the Household

The usufruct rights which women have in land and livestock, and the suaption rights they have in grain and milk, sometimes come into conflict with their husband's overriding right to dispose of these resources through exchange. In this section, the way in which a husband and wife negotiate with each other, and the factors they take into consideration in deciding what use their resources are put to, will be examined in detail.

It should be noted at the beginning of this discussion, that it is beneficial for a sum, both economically and for his social status, if he takes his wife's interests into account. This way he gives himself the chance to work with her and their children towards building a prosperous domestic unit or household. If a husband does not take his wife's interests into consideration, she can take various actions to persuade him to do so: a woman can make her husband's domestic situation intolerable (by refusing to cook, fetch water, or by using sorcery, etc.); she can return to her parental home; and, finally, if she has the support of male relatives who can put the case forward on her behalf, she can take her husband before the council of elders. The threat of her wife returning to her parents' home is most often used, and the most knedately effective of these alternatives. In the event that a wife runs to her parents in protest against her husband's use of her livestock or grain, the husband will only be able to retrieve her by taking beer to his ttfcica, and explaining his actions and promising to remedy the situation. Inpect of this course of action, it is Important to note that, among the Pliculturists, a woman can support herself and her child through her own by cultivating the land of her own kin. This may be one of the reasons why women run back to their parental houses so freely.

degree to which a woman can influence her husband's decisions over the
disposal of livestock, varies depending on which stock are in question, the nature of the relationship she has with her husband. A woman's ijtlimship with her husband changes as the years go by. In the initial of marriage, and so long as the children are still young, the husband manages his wife's stock together with his in a single herd, and, as osequence, he has a significant say in the management and disposal of her gstock. Later years, a woman will probably separate her herd from her husband's, as well as relying on the support of her adult sons, who help her in plogotiations with her husband over the management and disposal of her stock.

A woman's rights, and control over, her ohepkupes stock (obtained for agreeing to have sexual intercourse) are much greater than the ri^zts and control the has over her other stock. It is the one goat, out of all the ones she is premised, that a waaan must actually receive, and her husband cannot use this goat without first obtaining her agreement; if he does she will undoubtedly take action against him. If a husband receives his wife's permission to use her ohepkupes goat, it must, as soon as possible, be replaced by another female goat. She can agree to, and even encourage, her husband to start a tulia relationship with her ohepkupes goat, to ensure that her children and children's children will receive their Just share of goats in the future. Legally, a man could sell this goat, but there would be little purpose in her doing so, she would forego the goat's offspring which are destined for her children. A woman, if she were to sell her ohepkupes goat, her husband would be extremely ^sered and would undoubtedly beat her, or possibly try to get rid of her.

Besides trying to Influence how her husband uses and disposes of her t: stock, a woman can also increase her personal herd in the following ways: asking for the other stock she was premised for kiyul and tula; through aale of finger millet; possibly through the Inheritance of her mother's tock.

and eventually through the bridewealth of her daughters and sen's A waaan will give some of the stock she has control over to her law upon marriage, and may, if she can afford to do so, also give
to her sons. However, she will try to ensure that the bulk of her herd

for her last born son, and, in most oases, does not designate which

stock is to be inherited by each of her sons before she dies.

Then speaking about land and their rights to control land, women are quite

KokoP'katieny: "Land will last for ever. It does not die, like goats." A woman has almost complete authority over the land

when she receives at marriage. No one has any right to take it from her, and should she wish to use it, they must first receive her permission to do so. A woman will never forget the land given to her at turum, and she and her children, grandchildren, will use it whenever they find it necessary or convenient to do so. A mother may give pieces of her land to her sons, or to their wives, when they marry, but, as with her stock, the bulk of her land is inherited by her last born son. The only occasion when a woman and her children do not have their rights over land, arises when the woman was not legally married; that is when no bridewealth negotiations took place and her turum was not tied on.

Women's control and legal rights over the household resources is far more limited than men's, and are circumscribed by the domestic domain. Although women have important influence over, and rights in, the land and stock they are allocated within the household, they cannot use them to build wider exchange relationships outside the household, unless they do so through their husband or a male relation. Likewise, women have a great deal of influence and control over their daughters and sons, but they can only use this to fulfil their own personal needs and those of their children. In contrast to this, men can use their rights over land, stock, and children, to widen their network of exchange and improve their standing in the wider community.

A process of continual negotiation and renegotiation takes place between a man and his wife, in which the wife asserts the importance of her rights against one of her husband. The husband takes a good deal of notice of his wife's or demands, because otherwise he risks the break-up of the household, and th, of all the benefits it affords his. In most cases, without the help
fife and children, he would have a difficult time producing a

tial crop, and this would limit his ability to widen his economic
rships through exchange. The only exception to this is if a man (such

only has the good fortune to inherit a large herd of stock from his

. However, he would still not gain status and respect in the

^jjity if he were not able to remain married, and share his wealth through the

ous ceremonies and social obligations expected of a married man, his wife

. It is also important to note that, if there are no sons,

^iter can inherit the bulk of her parents' property. It would be more
difficult for a woman to hold on to such property than it would be for a man

but, because of it, she would be regarded as a very desirable bride and, once

arried, be in a strong position of control in the household.

Through marriage a man and his kin broaden their network of commitment

d support by establishing affinal relations. If his marriage breaks down, a

un loses these affines. Only if he fulfills his commitments to his wife and

tires, will a man have full social rights over his children. Sons are

important in that they continue the lineage, and eventually take on the

sibility of their father's property. Daughters are important in that,

through their marriage, exchange relationships are broadened, and the wealth of

household is increased through the payment of bridewealth. A man's status

respect in the community is dependent on his ability to obtain wealth and

^Udraa; without a wife he could have neither.

In certain respects, it is less important for women to stay married than

** for men. Women can have children and manage to fulfill their subsistence

through their own labor, without staying married. In many ways, men

^de women from the public domain, and women's status, vis-A-vis each other,

dependent on marriage or wealth. However, if a woman stays with her

it is usually more advantageous for herself and her children. It

A Possible for her sons to inherit a sizeable herd, and for the bride-

^transactions of her daughters to be clearly defined, without the
of who hat rights over what, as would ba the oasa if sha remar^ i tlaos, or lives with her parenta.

dependency of men and women on each other begins at marriage, whe^ .tiblish a domestio unit and attmspt to expand their domestic group %v t it! -•1th. through a complementary relationship with each other. However* » interests of the domestio unit often conflict with wider socio-economic interests. interests and needs of the domestic unit are basically t^ the mother and her children, while the wider socio-economic Interests ca^ v yentifi®d with the husband-father.

The distinction between domestio and public, however, is probably overN |i3plified if viewed as a distinction between opposites. Not only must a balance be kept between the two for both to survive and expand, but also ma^ of the transactions carried out by men in the public sphere are, in fact, f^ the benefit of the domestic group. (For example, the wider exchange relati^ ihips set up through tulla also increase the stock of the domestio group.)

Nonetheless, often the lanediate interests of the domestio group ccnflj^ with wider •public1 Interest®, as, for exaxzple, when a goat has to be 
•lau^ited for *ution; a ceremony done to chaee away and keep "badness" o^ of the area or neighbourhood. Different goats are taken from different koueholds cm a rotation basis over the years. When a goat is taken, the reeis it as a loss of property in terms of her household, while her husband geias in prestige and status through his oontributio to collective concerns, luring most of the ceremonies or feasts, the men of the concunity consume mo^ * the goods, snd only save (or bring heme) a small portion for their wives ^ en. in this way, the use of stock and grain for collective consumpti^ ^ direct conflict with the interests of individuals in the domestio unit, J. *ale and Female Perspectives on Ownership frm the above discussion, it is clear that Pokot define ownership right, ^d .
centrol over land, livestock and people differently in different context* ircia,ances. When questioned about ownership, Pokot men and women are
ilr careful to define the specific rights people have in different contexts\textsuperscript{9} in a public situation, and particularly in front of women, Pokot sen pi soft likely to say that it is they who have ultimate authority over the

important resources including women and children. Even so, Pokot men do not

^ to be as emphatic about their ownership rights, nor does ownership appear

to of such central importance, as is the case, according to

Ik Uflwelyn-Dati-as\textsuperscript{11} amongst the Maasai.\textsuperscript{11}

Unlike the Ifaasai, the Pokot have no single word which denotes ownership

\textsuperscript{old control. The concept of possession can be indicated by the preposition po.

fot example, ko po chi; house of a person, or a house belonging to a person.

However, the more common way of indicating possession is by putting a possessive

adjective after the noun, for example:

\begin{quote}
my goats. . . . neka chan
your goats. . . . neka ku
his goats . . . neka chi, and so on.
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{1} More possessive form of this exists by attaching the word for self: kegh.

For example, neka che chi kerih; goats which are his of himself, or goats which

belong to him himself.

Llewelyn-Davies describes far more specific words used by Vaasai to denote

the notion of possession. For the purpose of this discussion the two most

important Maasai words she describes are: 1) A-itore; to own, have rights of

disposal in, to be in charge of, to control, to command. This is used in

\textsuperscript{0} reference to the rights men have over women and livestock. 2) A-itodal; to

^t, to allocate. This is used to describe women's limited rights over

\textsuperscript{0}took (for

example, their milking rights, allocation of stock to sens, and

\textsuperscript{O* Llewelyn-Davies goes on to quote a prosperous Ifaasai elder in his use

of\textsuperscript{12} A-itore (the following underlined words): "I am extremely rich.

\textsuperscript{1} too control them all \ldots \textsuperscript{7 am the owner

who is in charge. I control

\textsuperscript{1} I control cattle

her analysis of the Maasai concept of ownership, Llewelyn-Davies claims

continual opposition between man on the one side, who are potential
owners with dependants having full rights in themselves, livestock and
several acquire full rights in themselves, livestock or children. Although
women have various rights and responsibilities, they together with
children - oonstitute a man's wealth and are "given away in
marriage as if they were passive objects of property to be transacted between
men.

In a general sense the framework which Llewelyn-Davies presents for the
giAssi could also be applied to Pokot: men control and have ultimate rights
ger women and livestock, while women's limited rights and control over
livestock and children are contingent on men. However, the situation is not
that simple and this is fully recognized by Pokot men and women. Although
set may wish to have the same sort of control over their women as they do over
their stock, this does not happen and their control is limited by a number of
social-economic factors. A Pokot man is careful when talking about his control
over women and livestock, especially when he does so in private, but also in
jltibyf. A Pokot woman may, on the other hand, initially say that all the
livestock belong to her husband, and that he has wesio; power or strength over
the herd, but she is, on the other hand, very unlikely to equate herself with
the livestock. Pokot women are particularly apprehensive about the control they
talieve they have over themselves and their bodies.

In explaining the Pokot case, I would modify the framework which
Llewelyn-Davies presents for the Kaas&i. In Pokot, while men have the ultimate
to dispose of their herds and resources as they wish, they only gain
tain rights over women and children through marriage. At marriage, women
certain ri^its over themselves and their bodies, and gain rights over
stock and children. In considering the intricate web of who has rights
*t la different contexts, let us examine some Pokot statements to see how
*®en view ownership.
I pokot older, Lecuria, explained the rights his son's wives have over their livestock by saying, "if Merinyang buys a goat he can give that house and it still belongs to him*. When men refer to women's stock over stock they often say that the stock belongs to "that house" which to a woman and her children rather than saying those are "her goats/

- It would be impossible to make any direct comparison of Lasuria's states* with that made by the rich tfaasai elder boasting of his wealth, g'yar, as a general principle it should be noted that it is considered fxtrosely unlucky to boast of one's wealth in Pokot. A man will never tissues the number of oattie he has and will often be elusive about the number of wives and children he has. If he boasts, or is too specific, he runs the isk of being cursed by others who are jealous or feel they deserve a portion of his wealth. A respected man of high social status is a wealthy man who continually shares his wealth (by slaughtering or exchanging livestock) with his relations, age-mates and nei^ibours.

2. Kama Maria, an older Pokot woman, said: "They -*y th* goat is yours only, but a man sells. They call it yours only." Earlier when I had taked her if she oould sell the goats given to her at marriage, her response ws: "Sell them. What will we eat? What will we give *he child? We will *ilk them and get the milk only."

This example shows the initial response women have when asked about their g*eral rights over stock. Women will invariably say that men 'own' the Restock thus reiterating the accepted or dominant social view. Only when a is asked specifically about her allocated stock, does she become k*ant about the rights she has over her livestock (see also example 3)* The example also reinforces the accepted idea that a woman is not only sponsible for herself, but for "her house", in other words, herself and her ck. The wealth women obtain is not for themselves individually but for children. Because of this, a woman is tied to her homestead and to her > out on the ether her.d, cho also has power, because of her property
q'st her sons and their wives,

When a woman is given or promised stock she is to stand up by such and such a cow, and the stock aha is promised on to her husband's hose are those which she *spears* along the way. To distinguish the livestock that a woman has more control over, Pokot call them stock which "ahe and her children will eat". The right actually to stock or dispose of livestock indicates one's right of ownership. In this Ut It is interesting that the fine a man has to pay if he comaita adultery u ("called "eating a woman". On the one hand, this could be seen as a direct expression of the concept that men have property rights over women, but the other, adultery is precisely the time a husband has lost control over his wife, specifically the rights over his wife's sexuality which he has obtained at marriage.

3. In discussing her rights over her chepkupes cow, Kama Amaru said:

"And chepkupes that becomes important. A person [referring to her husband] will not take. He will ask even before taking an ox. Even the father [the father of the husband] will ask."

I once asked Koko Meriongor, "does your husband have the right to take the goat which he gave you for your vagina?". She replied, "Ho, sjy children will go on eating that for ever ... but if he must have it then I won't refuse. He will say did the goat come from your stomach? Are not the *ts of your thighs only? It is I who is big."

These last two examples show how women become adamant and go into specific il when asked questions which refer directly to their rights in the atock allocated herds. Women are especially adamant when a discussion passes amongst women with no men present. Women seem to reiterate male when they feel it is beneficial for them to do so. They accept the
Tad on, which time they decide on the oouree of action they should fbatever the cage, it is significant that women express this dual tik*

jrtti?** oXio hand, women recognise the male social order, in other « how wen aee the world and women's position in it; on the other hand, ^^ articulate very apeoifically their own rights and power to control.
sre not afraid to act on their rights as they perceive them if they feel u -* saftvebeen abused by men. This is probably one of the main reasons why lamj***
define their rights so specifically: only if they themselves are aware of their rights can they take action in defence of thma. Hen might assert that they control women through marriage, but wanen dearly do not accept this poiit of view unconditionally and take action against individual men if they fail that they have abused their authority.

Keeping in mind that conflictia often arise between husbands and wives over their reapective rigits, it is interesting that when speaking about a wife'e rigths over stock Lomuria said: "A person who is clever will divide his goats into two houses. A person who is weak will keep his goats in one house eying, 'Hal Let us use the goats together'. But then a woman will continue disturbing him and she will try and control the goats." Men would probably Prefer to ignore women's specific rigths over livestock. They accept that *en have rights over stock, but usually speak of those rigths in general tev's, for example, they refer to the women's livestock as stock in "her house".
on the other hand, speak about their livestock in very specific terms Noting the details of the different stock given to them for different reasons, "Weby specifying the particular stock they have more control over.
possible symbolic importance which the giving of the chepkupes stock ^ Pregard to male control over female sexuality will be discussed in detail M.A. @laboration of the splitting of the oouree of action which should W occur the first night a husband has sexual intercourse with his wife. » it is interesting that women, rather than men, emphasise the

G?
It is the women who demand it. The emphasis women put on receiving their *shepkupes* stock reflect their attitude about their sexuality. From a woman's perspective, it is a statement of pride and, whether realistic or not, of her control over her sexuality: she is demanding from her husband direct payment to her, rather than to her family, for rights in her sexuality.

The second remark by KokoMeriongor (example K) is interesting for a number of reasons. Firstly, it expresses her recognition of the fact that, although she has considerable rights over her *shepkupes* goats, her husband's rights in stock overrides these. KokoMeriongor also implies, although indirectly, that women express the authority they have over livestock to emphasise their own self-importance and prestige (and, as we have seen, the importance and authority of men is then reiterated by women). Secondly, by saying the goats are only for the woman's thighs, KokoMeriongor refers directly to the fact that this goat gives a man rights over a woman's sexuality and her ability to bear children. Unlike other societies (for example, the Earner of Ethiopia), Pokot women are not given stock after they have given birth to children, instead they are given stock for their ability to bear children. Thirdly, the quote implies that a 'own has more rights over her children than her goats. If a husband and wife cannot take away her young children, whereas he can easily take away or refuse to give her any stock. This is not true regarding older children, who is unlikely that a woman with grown children would choose to run away from her husband or split up her marriage.

The important relationship between a woman's ownership rights in her stock and her sexuality brings us to the crucial topic of female property. This will be dealt with in the next chapter where we explore the years in which female sexuality is ritually controlled.
### TABLE II  PROPERTY USUALLY ACQUIRED BY A HUSBAND IN KATUW

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Property</th>
<th>On what Occasion</th>
<th>Premise made by whom: or how Acquired</th>
<th>Received before Marriage Possible</th>
<th>Received at Marriage</th>
<th>Received Later</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2 female goats</td>
<td>kiyul; initiation</td>
<td>Parents, and relations</td>
<td>2 female goats</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 male goat</td>
<td>tuliaj stock association, including sapana</td>
<td>1 male goat</td>
<td>1 female goat</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 female goat</td>
<td></td>
<td>Purchased from employment</td>
<td>2 female goats</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 female goats</td>
<td>carrying out a special task</td>
<td>Parents or relations</td>
<td>1 female goat</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 female goats</td>
<td>At Marriage</td>
<td>Father</td>
<td>2 female goats</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 male goat and land</td>
<td>At Marriage</td>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>1 male goat and land</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>? stock/land</td>
<td>Inheritance</td>
<td>Father</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>? stock/land</td>
<td>Inheritance</td>
<td>Mother</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**N.B.** Goats, cows or sheep may constitute the property acquired. Most of his stock property before marriage will be used for Bridewealth negotiations.
**TABLE II: PROPERTY TYPICALLY PROMISED AND WHEN USUALLY ACQUIRED BY A WIFE IN KATUNU**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Property Promised</th>
<th>On what Occasion</th>
<th>Promise made by whom</th>
<th>Received at Marriage</th>
<th>Received after Birth of Firstborn</th>
<th>Received in 'Need*</th>
<th>Receipt Improbable, or Eventually</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4 female goats</td>
<td>Kiyul; initiation</td>
<td>Parents A relations</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 female goat*</td>
<td>1 female goat</td>
<td>2 female goats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 female goat</td>
<td>Kiyul; at marriage</td>
<td>Parents</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 female goat</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 female goats</td>
<td>at milk trees</td>
<td>Husband's relation</td>
<td></td>
<td>2 female goats</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 female goats</td>
<td>Trees with beehive</td>
<td>ft ft</td>
<td></td>
<td>2 female goats</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 female goats</td>
<td>Path Junctions</td>
<td>Husband</td>
<td></td>
<td>3 female goats</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>female goat</td>
<td>Irrigation canal</td>
<td>Husband's relation</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 female goat</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>female goat</td>
<td>Entering in-laws</td>
<td>Husband</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 female goat</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>female goat</td>
<td>Entering mother-in-law; 9 hut (sendit)</td>
<td>Mother-in-law</td>
<td>1 female goat*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>female goat</td>
<td>Eating food</td>
<td>Mother-in-law</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 female goat</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>female goat</td>
<td>Closing door</td>
<td>Husband</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 female goat</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>female goat</td>
<td>Taking off skirt</td>
<td>Husband</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 female goat</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>female goat</td>
<td>Coming to bed</td>
<td>Husband</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 female goat</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>female goat</td>
<td>Chepku pes</td>
<td>Husband</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 female goat</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NOSIO:***

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Property Promised</th>
<th>On what Occasion</th>
<th>Promise made by whom</th>
<th>Received at Marriage</th>
<th>Received after Birth of Firstborn</th>
<th>Received in 'Need*</th>
<th>Receipt Improbable, or Eventually</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>female goat</td>
<td>Tying turum</td>
<td>Husband's relation</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 piece of land</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>female goat</td>
<td>piece of land</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 piece of land</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>female goat</td>
<td>piece of land</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 piece of land</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>female goat</td>
<td>piece of land</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 piece of land</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>female goat</td>
<td>Knotting turum</td>
<td>Father-in-law</td>
<td>1 female goat*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>female goat</td>
<td>Kiyul; for turum</td>
<td>Mother</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 female goat</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stook/lanu</td>
<td>Inheritance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>? Stock/land</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N.B. Goats, cows or sheep may be promised  
*Property wife has most control over.
although aona should return to their real father when they are
jyoxyiately eight, I know of two cases in the Katuw area where aona did
return to their father's home. One of these boys was only about ten
years old, so he might still return to his father's home later. The other
im now adolescent and, although he asked for a goat from his father
just be was circumcised, he did not return to stay with his father and is
ubliialy to do so in the future. When he was still young, the boy stayed
with his mother helping her to produce a subsistence crop until she died
guddenly. He is now with his mother's mother, and will most likely inherit
part of his grandmother's property along with his mother's brothers.

2. Conant (1966: 507) reports that twenty per cent of wives from the
Kasol plains (a pastoralist area bordering the agriculturists) come from
the Sekerr mountain A (an agricultural area). From my work amongst the
agriculturists, I only know of one woman who comes from a bordering
pastoralist area. I do not know the details of h&h marriage history and
it is therefore possible that her parents had begun cultivating, or moved
to an agricultural area (for example, because of drought), before she was
married.

3. It can happen that, among the agriculturists, the age gap between a
toband and wife is as little as five or six years. Among the pastoralists,
however, the age gap between husband and wife tends to be much wider, due to
more formalized nature of their age set system. I was told by
•STiculturists that men and women should not marry each other, if they are
\^Uacised within the same pun. There is, however, little agreement on this,
aibe people specified that, as long as the individuals concerned were not
P^illy in seclusion at the same time (as tlyrs and chemeri), they may marry.
**@ In point was Merinyang who, because his father was rich, married two
soon after he was initiated.
I good illustration of how a mother-in-law can break up a marriage, the marriage of Cheposiya. She married a man whose previous two wives run away, possibly also because of his mother. He was an only son and sother was very possessive of him, and insisted that he eat in her house also gossiped with him about his wife, accusing her of misbehaving. This ^gjtd many quarrels between Cheposiya and her husband. Nevertheless, Cheposiya stayed some five years and bore two daughters but then, after a final violent quarrel, she fled to her parental home. After this, because of his mother, Cheposiya's husband announced that he never wanted another wife.

Conant (1966: 314) describes marriage by capture as including "abduction, confinement and enforced intercourse", and goes on to refer to the act as "sanctioned rape" (ibid.). I have also been told, mostly by men, that enforced intercourse can occur as a consequence of marriage by capture. However, from the case examples I have recorded, it appears that marriage by capture usually takes a far less violent form, and women are often in agreement with their abductors.

Schneider (1957: 285) also noted that a Pokot bride is referred to as a cow, and that the contract is compared with tulia. The Pokot are not alone in this respect, for example, the Hamar of southern Ethiopia also make the analogy between wives and cows, and have a contract equivalent to tulia Vtydall/strecker 1979: 4-5). The economic implications of tulia have been ttfcaidered elsewhere by Herskovits (1926).

Bridewealth is found among both pastoral groups, such as the (Spencer 1965) and mixed agricultural groups, such as the Hamar &Wall/stracker 1979).

is an interesting example of the recognition by Pokot (men and ) of the close relationship which exists between mothers and daughters ^8cuaBed sfr for fully ^c hapter 7) According to H. Kuper (1950s 95), a
^Itr situation exists amongst the patrilineal Swazi and, at marriage,
^there care and affection are recognised in the special gift of stock,
^p^n ** the 'wiper' of tears', which the *groom* gives the bride's mother,

I know of one case, where the bride happily accepted her parents' choice
the husband was good-looking, and wealthy. She was the only

newly married bride made no attempt to run back to
her parental home, and was extremely pleased with her marriage from the start.
The women of Katuw considered she was too pleased, and were angered by her not
running home to make her husband follow her.

^Tb' conflict between the private and wider socio-economic interests of
^domestic unit, is also a feature of societies as different to the Pokot as
the Pira-Parana of South America (see C. Hugh-Jones 1978).

12 M. Llewelyn-Lavies 'Women, warriors and patriarchs' (unpublished) p. 3.
Chapter IV

Bitual Control of Female Sexuality and Fertility

Women's 'secret' Myth (tf. Llewelyn-Davies):

Once men and women were equal. There were no [male] 'elders' in the land, but only women, known as ilpongolo [women-warriors], and 'moran' [men; warriors]. The women were braver than the men. It that time, they had no vaginas, but only tiny holes for urine to pass through.

One day they accompanied the 'moran' to war because the men needed assistance. That night, as they were sitting round their separate fires, the 'moran' crept up behind the women carrying bows, things which the women knew nothing of. The 'moran' pushed the sharp ends of their bows into the women's bodies and created vaginas. The women and the 'moran' lay down together. In the morning the 'moran' got up and said 'Ahahl these are only women after all!' So they took them and married them. Women lost their bravery, and fertility began.

Pokot Ityth (usually told by women, but accepted by both men and women):

They say all people were men, but in fact some of those people were really women. People did their hair in siolup [elaborate mud-pack worn by Pokot men some sixty years ago]. They stayed like that until a woman told a person, that is a man, 'You can scratch here.' Didn't that person scratch. Didn't that woman stay just like that. Months went by. And when people came and looked at her stomao, they asked 'What is this thing? What has eaten this woman to make her stomach swell?' Didn't she lie down one day, and people said that she had died .... But didn't she Just give birth, end they saw it was a person .... Her breasts were very big and when they showed the breasts to the child the child suckled .... Then they asked 'What happened so that it became like this?' And that person said, 'She told me to scratch here, and I told her like this [i.e. I did this to her].' They went on selecting the ones who had breasts, and they went on cutting the siolup. Then a person Just took his wanan. They went on playing sex, and they then gave birth. Then it Just became that a person's woman is a person's wanan.

The myths concerning the initial differentiation between the sexes serve introduction to this chapter. It is clear that, although the two are ^l&Tj the emphasis or apparent message of each myth is very different. In ^ myth men and women were once the same but, unlike the account ^-lyn-Davies gives of the Maasai, women were never braver than men nor did "en f0

^"* women into the initial sexual act by "creating their vaginas". The "m the Maasai myth is suzanned up in the last sentence, "When women lost
Whether Uaasai women actually view their fertility as another issue. Nonetheless, they pin-point sexuality/fertility as the reason for losing their equality with men.

The message in the Pokot myth is less absolute. It is the women who carry out the first sexual act; a woman says to a man, "you and scratch ae here". The statement suggests two important ideas.

Firstly, that Pokot women assume that they have control over their own bodios, and secondly, that women's understanding and knowledge of their own sexuality and fertility is greater than men's. In the myth, there is no expression of loss of bravery or status after the initial sexual act. In fact, when I suggested the possibility, both men and women insisted that there were no Pokot stories about women once being more powerful than men. It is also interesting to note that the Pokot myth emphasizes the importance of the pairing off of ououples, "then it became that a person's woman is a person's wanana". This utment implies that after the discovery of sexual intercourse the pairing off of ououples, or the possession of women, was necessary or inevitable. The myth, therefore, suggests that it was the control of female sexuality that wantually led to marriage. This is interesting in view of the Pokot data that indicate it is not innately accepted that female sexuality is rolled by men. Instead, this is an area which is continually renegotiated private between individual men and women.

ever, to look at what is actually being said in a myth is of course only of explanation. Each society has its own myth of how sex differs, and there are many similar stories documented for other East Peoples. I was, however, struck by the account G. KLima (1970: 83-9) of the Barabaig, a group of pastoralists in north-eastern Tanzania. The Barabaig myth is extremely similar to the Pokot myth the emphasis on the control of female sexuality is not a unique feature of the Pokot, but is also found in other East Peoples. (KLima simply describes the following as a "myth", without if ** it is told by men, women or both.)
Long ago, in the beginning of time, women had no husbands but moved from kraal to kraal, staying only a short time with one man. One day, tired of their inferior status, some women went to a powerful female magician. She gave them a magical potion. 

One day, after a heavy rain, the men returned home. They told the women to go out and milk the cows. While milking the cows, the women put the magical potion into the milk gourds and gave them to the men. Upon drinking the potion, the men's minds began to change. That night each woman stayed with the man she was with at the time and continued to stay. This was the beginning of marriage. Hereafter, the men were afraid of losing the ygaon and began to respond to their wishes.

Although the Barabaig myth does not focus on the first sexual act, it does locate marriage as being the reason for the change in what the Barabaig story was area's "Inferior status". I mention the myth, not only because of its dailarities to the Pokot myth, but also because it dearly illustrates that what is said or expressed in a myth may have a number of different meanings. The myth raises various questions which Klima leaves unanswered such as, is this what Barabaig men want women to say, and if so, why?

ELiiaa claims that Barabaig women enjoy a relatively high social and legal status preserved by a tarn's council which defends various women's rights (1970: 94). However, the council is used mainly by women to defend themselves if their sexuality has been abused (much in the same way as Pokot women do through tumbajaama, see ^v•••E). From the other data ELiiaa presents, it is clear that the ^io-economic and legal status of Barabaig women is still far inferior to that of Barabaig men. As such, it is important to remember that the views and attitudes which are expressed in myth may at times contradict, and at other times ^t h a social reality. The view expressed in the Pokot myth will now be in relation to Pokot gender constructs and attitudes towards female and fertility.

are two distinct views concerning female sexuality and fertility discussed in this chapter. One is the male perspective which is ** IMblicly and concerns various pollution taboos. This perspective
times used by men as a rationale for the subordination of women. The bar is a female perspective, which views aspects of female sexuality and fertility (such as menstruation and childbirth) as something positive that women can use to their own advantage. In particular circumstances women may use various pollution taboos as a means of manipulative power. In jysia of male and female perspectives in relation to the ritual roles of men and women will be discussed in the third and final section of this chapter.

Kale Perspective: The Social Ideal Articulated In Public (emphasized by men, but accepted by both men and women)

A Pokot man once said to me: "A woman can never walk a straight line like a man [comparing this to a particular star which over the months gradually travels across the sky from east to west]. She will always have to stop and start again [because of menstruation and by implication childbirth]." To him, this was a clear and obvious explanation of why women could never do what men do. As far as Pokot men are concerned, women could never be as productive as men, nor could they take on the responsibility men have, because of their childbearing capacities. However, it is important to note that it is not really women's childbearing capacities which make them unable to "walk a straight line like men", but the way in which Pokot define women's reproductive Powers.

Although in Pokot children are highly valued by both men and women, a
duration menstruation, after clitoridotomy, and at childbirth (during
and just before and after childbirth). Both men and women, but

ultrarily women, are considered polluted after sexual intercourse especially
ultcry has been committed. There are various forms of purification after different periods of pollution, some of which may be performed in a ritual test by women, some by elders, and others in a more private situation by the pollution taboos, as well as the various cleansing rituals. Let the different areas which men and women assume control over:

Menstruation

Men and women never discuss menstruation openly or directly in public, refer to menstruation metaphorically, whereas women amongst themselves speak about menstruation more directly (see 17:2:5). For example, a man talks about a menstruating woman as one who is "sitting aside", because of the taboos and prohibitions which restrict her activity. When speaking about menstruation itself, a man may simply say, "srakachi; the cloth of a person", which refers to the particular skirt a woman wears while menstruating.

To ask if a woman has completed her menstruation period a man may say, "has she gone to the river?", intimating whether she has washed after the completion of her menstruation period. To ask if a young girl has reached puberty and started menstruating a man could say, "has she crossed the river?", relating menstruation directly to female initiation, since girls in seclusion cannot cross the river without hitting it with their ritual sticks, and are also not allowed to wash until after their coming-out ceremony.

In comparison to other states of pollution, men consider women to be most polluted or 'dangerous' while they are menstruating. I have sometimes heard breaking of menstruation taboos given as a reason for divorce, particularly the woman "catches or touches things", such as a man's cattle when she is menstruating. It is ritually taboo for a menstruating woman to come into contact with or handle any sort of food or beverage which men might not drink. This restricts a woman from doing various subsistence tasks which PM Usually performs; such as milking stock; gathering vegetables; grinding and fetching water (she can carry the containers, but must make sure her hands do not touch the mouth of the calabash). She may do some
work on the farm, as long as she does not touch any of the crops. A menstruating woman should also not osie into direct contact with any food adiera or utensils which men might use, for example, if she is drinking jj, public she should not only sit slightly apart from others, but should bold the beer oalebash with a cloth. A very conservative Pokot woman keep own cups, calabashes end bowls completely separate from men at ti***.

I menstruating woman's state of pollution affects anything she comes Into contact with, so that she must stay sway from men or anything directly associated with men. A woman Is not allowed to pass behind a man when she is menstruating and she should not caress or have sexual intercourse during this time. It is strongly believed that if a man has a sexual relationship with a menstruating woman he will become "shaky and weak". In a similar vein a menstruating woman should not handle a man's spear, or these days his gun, because of the fear that if she does it will not shoot straight and will fail to hit its target. A woman's 'dangerous' state may also affect things by association, even if she does not come into direct contact with than. For example, a woman is restricted from drinking oow's milk during menstruation. Certain cows are usually set aside particularly for women. A woman should not wash herself in the irrigation canal. The irrigation system is not directly associated with men, but a woman's pollution may spread to the irrigated by the different canals. This taboo does not neessarily T "only to women washing themselves after their menstruation period, but to Bother of a child” or women who have menstruated and borne children. *coen are only allowed to wash after their menstruation period is L

7s?
Pokot women do not use any method of restricting the flow of blood. Once only known, although not openly spoken about, when a woman is posting* Consequently, this, plus the various ritual restrictions inferred, have a rest period every month, "sitting aside" from the arena of activities and men. During this period, the subsistence tasks a woman normally performs are done by her daughters, women relations or neighbors, and her husband when necessary.

The details of oltioridotoqy as well as the notions of pollution and purification are discussed in Chapter V, on women's a initiation.

- Childbirth

A pregnant woman is not considered to be as polluting, or polluted, as a tasen who is bleeding or discharging from her vagina. She can perform her usual subsistence tasks, although she should cook her food separately and eat from different utensils. She is somewhat restricted in the food she is allowed to eat, for example, she should not eat the meat of a dead or old cow unless, after inspecting the meat, older women have said it is all right to do so. The pregnant woman is regarded as someone vulnerable to disease and witchcraft, and her vulnerability in turn affects her husband. To cite some examples; If a pregnant woman passes a woman whose baby has recently died, the pregnant woman will have to be ritually cleansed and protected by a kololian; a man who killed an enemy. A pregnant woman's husband should not go hunting because he is believed that the animal he hunts will not die, and he and the others will be killed on the hunt. Also, he should not kill a snake, because when the child is born it will wriggle like a snake.

However, the most important cleansing or purification which takes place before birth is the ceremony of par para. It is only necessary for a married couple to hold one large par para (which is attended by the entire community and close relatives) ritually to ensure the safe and easy birth of their child.

However, it is considered necessary that a pregnant woman, married, admit all the possible fathers before she gives birth, so that
A small version of parpara for each man concerned.

\[ P_{571} \]

I suggested to oleanna the ainliving of any past or present conflict. The elders of the community came forward to appease the ancestors by repeating a chant as one of them calls out for the families and clans involved. All of these "words" are inserted in a mortar filled with water and red earth, which is stirred and blessed as it is passed around the hut from one elder to the other. At the end of the ceremony, the mortar is placed between the end of the ceremony and the mortars of the families and clans involved.

The actual act of childbirth is strictly a woman's affair. Men stay well outside unless a serious complication develops, in which case the elders are called to come and slaughter a goat near by and appease the disturbing ircestors. Every effort is made to hasten the birth and save the life of the mother, rather than that of the unborn child. There is an organized system of midwifery with at least one experienced midwife residing in each korok or neighbourhood. Unless a Kokoegh wife or hands, or midwife, delivers a still-born child, a woman will use the same midwife for the delivery of all her children. The midwife is paid for her services with beer and later a female goat.

A woman about to give birth does not usually lie still during her labour. She will get up and walk or crawl trying to induce the birth and ease pain. The various women present may massage the pregnant woman's back or.

» in extreme cases, lift her up and shake her. Some birth more easily than others, but after giving birth to two or ren most Pokot women give birth without much trouble. When a woman giv birth she sits on a flat stone sometimes holding her arms stretched and her hands in the air. She is expected to show the minimum of And keep quiet, but she may be held by one woman supporting her.
...other one holding her thighs. Because of olitoridotory, it is to out a wcuan Just before she gives birth to her first two children.

ririfo makes two outs on each side of the vagina (at right angles to the iitoral line) thereby expanding the size of the vaginal opening. Once is born, the midwife outs the unbilical cord, and quickly buries the

I?tor a woman gives birth she is ocnsidered unclean or polluted and is in similar ways as to when she is menstruating end after tito rdotory. For the first few days she should not touch any food with her lis, not her own food, which she must pick up with a stick unless another omi feeds her. During this time she should not go out in public and is joelaid in her home, wearing her kolika: the large skin cloak worn during initiation. She should not see men, including her husband, although this is not strictly adhered to. However, men will never discuss the sex or health of their new-born baby until their wives have completed their period of semi-seclusion about one month later. After approximately one week, Kokoeh or another older woman comes to ble33 and wash the mother and her child in the ritual of lapow. After this a woman can eat her food with her own hands and be seen in public, but her movements and behaviour are still restricted in a water of ways.

For approximately one month, until a woman "stops bleeding", her diet is restricted. She is not allowed to drink water, because it is believed that the water will lodge in her back and cause her pain. She should only drink dotted milk, and obtains other liquid through the thin porridge she is meant iak. Pekot are adament that this restriction on a new aother is purely for health reasons. In fact, wenen these days go to the hospital to get an Action which they believe allows them to drink water (the injection is a vitamin complex, but it is only after women have recei?d their Action that they freely drink liquids). When a woman no longer has any discharge or bleeding, her period of semi-seclusion is over and she is
another one holding her thighs. Because of olitoridotomy, it is

possible to exit a wcuan Just before she gives birth to her first two children.

A midwife makes two outs on each side of the vagina (at right angles to the

line) thereby expanding the size of the vaginal opening. Once

a child is born, the midwife outs the umbilical cord, and quickly buries the

umbilical cord.

After a woman gives birth she is considered unclean or polluted and is

excluded in similar ways as to when she is menstruating and after

olitoridotomy. For the first few days she should not touch any food with her

hands, nor her own food, which she must pick up with a stick unless another

woman feeds her. During this time she should not go out in public and is

excluded in her home, wearing her kolika, the large skin cloak worn during

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Sexual Intercourse

A person who has had sexual intercourse is considered to be somewhat iled and thereby a threat to all young babies. It is believed that, if the ym of someone who has had sexual intercourse the previous nišit faLis on a or its utensils, the baby will become seriously ill. To prevent people • polluted state from ootning near new-born babies a crude gate is built ar the entrance of the homestead, and women with young babies usually stay ftj from unfamiliar crowds. A stranger to the area will not pass through a gate, whatever the case, for fear that he/she may be blamed if the baby nre to become seriously ill.

There are other restrictions regarding when men and women should and should not have sexual intercourse. In every case it is the woman and her children who are affected if these restrictions are not adhered to. For example, if a pregnant woman frequently has sexual intercourse with her husband, it is believed that her baby will be born orus with a white film covering its y. (The word orus is also used to describe an unclean or polluted state.) • orus is usually only accused of having had sexual intercourse too frequently if she has given birth to an orus child. If an orus child is born the woman should smear her own eyes and feet with a particular fat, for example the fat * of a sheep's tail.

In fact any sort of difficult birth is associated with a wanana "shaving sexually. One of the taboos taken most seriously, is the belief at a woman should not conceive a child before having had her third •-ruation following her previous birth. If she does conceive a child th then the ceremony of riwoji must be performed. This ceremony is also a woman has a breech birth or if twins are born. Riwoji is done with complex purification rituals which are performed just after H, including the smearing of fat on the feet of the child’s parents. ge ceremony where an ox is slaughtered, must later be held before the
The parents of *riwoi* children are a 4h have special powers which I will discuss more fully in the third

...section of this chapter (17.3).

If a *woman* has sexual intercourse with her husband before her baby is 1n to walk, it is believed that her baby or her other children will become m end die. A woman can privately bless her baby (who is considered to be most vulnerable) by smearing his/her joints with a mixture of the widened red earth taken from the centre of the hearth plus her own urine and that of her husband. The exact mixture used to smear the joints of the baby varies from area to area, but the two most important ingredients are always the burnt earth from the hearth and mother's urine. Whatever the case, it is the other's responsibility to carry out the purification ritual of her baby in private.

Among the pastoralists it is believed that, if a *woman* has sexual relations with her husband when their baby is still small, she can cleanse her baby by using the earth from the hearth and her own urine alone. It is only if she has *a sexual* relations with a man other than her husband, that it is considered necessary for her to obtain his urine in addition to the other ingredients. It may be that adultery is more frequent among the pastoralists, especially since they have a higher rate of polygeny and there are more unmarried young men. It is difficult to document, however, because unless adultery is discovered People will rarely admit to having had an adulterous affair, especially if there is a recognised way in which women can ritually cleanse their children.

Kolos etheless

both examples, from among the agriculturists and the pastoralists, are interesting because they require cooperation between men and women. In ker words this is a private or negotiated agreement between an individual and woman. The asexual offence would only become public knowledge (and the knowledge of the anthropologist) if the child were to become ill or, in the case of the pastoralists, if someone were to discover that adultery had...
have already discussed, if adultery is discovered the oaae is
by the council of elders who decide on the appropriate action to be
cd by the adulterer. The fine the adulterer must pay to the husband of
the adulteress depends on the severity of the case (this may be as high as two
fifteen head of
among the pastoralists). Ken and women have different views on
(adultery; the women's perspective is discussed in IV.2:D). In public, men
phasize that committing adultery is considered a severe breach of
conduct. For men or women to commit adultery runs against the social
However, after adultery has been committed, although a man must pay a
fijie, thereby depleting his much valued herd, he is not considered polluted or
The adulteress, on the other hand, is considered polluted and she
her children must be ritually cleansed.
No matter how trivial the case of adultery might be considered (even if no
fine has been levied), the adulterer must cleanse the adulteress and her family
through the ritual of mwata; to wash. It is a private ceremony in which the
adulterer and his family must bring a small amount of beer to the husband of
the woman, plus milk and dung from their goats to smear on the joints, chest,
forehead of the woman and her children. If this ritual cleansing is not
Perform, it is strongly believed that the woman, but more especially her
children, will become ill and die. There are other beliefs which affect the
her husband, but these are not as strongly emphasized. For example,
all the stock she and her husband possess will die; or that if a woman
birth to a child belonging to someone other than her husband, all the
children of her and her husband will die if the 'illegitimate' child sits on
It is only necessary to pay a fine and perform mwata if adultery has been
ered, or if the people involved admit to having an adulterous liaison.
metterer is unlikely to admit this because of the fine he has to pay, and
stress is hesitant to do so because of the resulting quarrels with her

/O'S/
...shame involved in having to go through mwata. However, a will probably confess to adultery if some misfortune occurs in her family, children become seriously ill. KokcMasinyang is a case in point. She 4 been having adulterous relations with three men from the Katuw community a nisfer of years. It was only after her child became ill, and she feared he would not recover, that she found it necessary to inform people of her various relationships.

The adulterer is not considered polluted or vulnerable to disease as is the adulteress. Nevertheless, he is blessed when he has paid his fine and the case is settled. Pokot say that the blessing is performed to "end all the words" or close the case, which suggests that the blessing is necessary as an assurance against any witchcraft or further demands of property from the husband of the adulteress, rather than as a ritual purification. The only time I recorded a case when men were cleansed for their various sexual offences was among the agriculturists. Just before a party of men set out to hunt a buffalo (organized hunting occurred rarely in the area as large game was usually confined to the plains and seldom wandered into the farming district in the hills). Before the party of young men set off for the hunt, the elders were called to cleanse them of any sexual offences they might have committed. There were no particular cases of adultery referred to by the elders or admitted to by the young men. One of the elders explained that the blessing was necessary because, "these days men play sex with many different women". He was thus *proving that some of the men had broken various sexual taboos, such as committing adultery, or two men having sexual intercourse with the same girl or woman *ing one menstrual oyole (this is said to harm the different men as well as the girl concerned). To perform their blessing, the elders first asked all the *** of the hunting party to urinate in a particular place along the main pathway then each dip their toes and heels into this mixture. After this, the **ers recited a blessing over the hunters' weapons both to absolve the "words of men and girls", and also to bless the success of the hunt.

*toQ
If complications developed later that day the elders felt it was
$x to perform a second ritual cleansing. By using a oluap of burning
i they brushed against the ankles of each of the hunters. The only other
$ this type of blessing is performed is after someone
has died. Fire

^ to cleanse the utensils and tools of the deceased, any of his children ^ yet given birth, and the relative who performs the burial (this varies
different Pokot areas and in some places the relative who buries the deceased
cleansed with water). The explanation the Pokot gave for cleansing th®
close relatives of the deceased was "so that death will not attack then".
blessing, therefore, is meant to protect the relatives from drying, and froia
jam the ancestral spirit of the deceased may cause them. Although there re
gore levels of interpretation than the actors' explanation (some of which I ^H
explore in the third section of this chapter), the fact that the same type
blessing is performed in both cases is a significant indication of the severity
with which the Pokot regard the breaking of sexual taboos. The state of
pollution caused by committing sexual offences is regarded as being equally
harmful or 'dangerous' as the pollution caused by death. However, it is
important to emphasize that it is the wan an her small children who are a®st
affected if any of the taboos concerning sexual intercourse are broken.

Women's Perspective or Point of View

This section is an examination of the way in which wanen perceive their
sexuality and fertility. At times women express a positive pride in the**
sexuality and fertility which contrasts strongly with the siale articulate**
Point of view discussed above. This may be in a ritual context such as their
Elation rite or in turiha noma (the action taken by a group of women if a
and has abused his wife's sexuality), but it is also apparent in daily life
Sh the various things women say and the actions they choose to take.

M
of these contexts are reviewed in this section with the topic discussed
**®ilar order to the one adopted above (Section IT.1).

/O?
Taboos Viewed as Advantageous to Women

Although by no means would it be said that all pollution taboos are to women (for example the taboo restricting women from drinking during menstruation), the various taboos surrounding menstruation, childbirth (especially just after birth), and just after clitoridotomy, ensure that women have a minimal amount of work to do and are cared for and left disturbed. During these periods, women actually need space and time to recuperate because of their physical condition and new state which may also involve hormonal changes (except perhaps after clitoridotomy). It is difficult to interpret the fact that according to the articulated point of view, women are more pollution-prone than men. However, it would be incorrect to assume that men are imposing these taboos and prohibitions onto women in order to maintain their position of dominance and control. Although this may be part of the reason, it is important to explore what these taboos actually mean to women, and to seek an explanation of why the form of these taboos may be advantageous to women. Instead of assuming that men are imposing these prohibitions onto women, let us explore the possibility that women may be imposing these restrictions onto themselves.

Given that women want to rest during menstruation, and after childbirth and clitoridotomy, it may be that women forbid themselves to carry out many of the subsistence tasks they usually perform. They do this by claiming that they are too 'dangerous' during these periods. In other words, they would danger others if they were to cook, milk stock and so on, because of their diluted state. A woman does not claim that she is 'too important' to carry her subsistence tasks, but simply claims that she is 'impure'. In this way does not threaten the dominant position of men in Pokot society. As a result, even though men are excluded by women, and might actually have to do some of their work for them, they accept this because their own image of self-importance has not been threatened. However, this argument begins with the possibility that Pokot women accept a submissive or subordinate status to men.
women may open the grain stores among the agriculturists, and only women do the milking (at the homestead but not the cattle camps) among the Pokot. It is thus publicly recognized that the distribution and control of subsistence food is the responsibility of women.

Pokot women can and do use their control of subsistence food and labour as leverage with men. A case example of this was Koko Aricmono, who became angry with her husband for lending a friend the calabash she used for carrying water without her permission. She refused to cook Ariccaonyang decent meals, and only brought him a small amount of leftover food (cooked maize) after he had been working on the farm all day. When he saw this he began to quarrel with her and they started to fight. Soon afterwards, Lalco Aricoaoyang left and went to stay with her parents for several weeks. Not only can women refuse to do certain tasks, but presumably they can also ensure that they and their children get enough food by giving their husbands less in times of hunger. (I do not, however, have case examples of this as I was not in Pokot during any severe drought or food shortage.)

All of this suggests the possibility that men have not imposed food preparation and other subsistence tasks on women, but rather that women have excluded men from this province, which is one they can manage and need to monopolize, to give them bargaining power vis-à-vis men. To do this women have told men that they are "too good and important to carry out inferior tasks". Women accept this because it reinforces their image of self-importance. When women then want to exclude themselves from having to do these subsistence tasks (for example, during menstruation), they claim to be "impure" which further reinforces the image men have of their own self-importance. Although women recognize rights over the control and distribution of subsistence goods, ultimate authority over the means of subsistence still lies in the hands of women. Women use their rights as strategies of manipulative power within the dominated system. Women's perceived self-importance in monopolizing subsistence tasks and goods, can be likened to the image of self-importance
ilka to maintain. In view of women’s perception of their own self-
that as childbearers, and in view of their monopolising subsistence tasks,

return to the discussion of pollution taboos.

Menstruation and use of Menstrual Blood

Amongst themselves women discuss menstruation far more openly and do not speak about it metaphorically. When referring to a woman who is

-trusting women will often simply say "her blood has come", although they use some of the more common metaphors I have already mentioned if men are eatfit. I have never heard women discuss menstruation taboos in a directly positive way (for example, in expressing their relief that they do not have to work), but on the other hand, I have never heard women complain bitterly about the fact that they are wont to "sit aside" during their menstrual periods, menstruation taboos and restrictions are not topics of discussion unless the taboos are broken. Usually they are simply adhered to without any explanation or resistance.

One particular instance, when I broke a taboo by mistake, revealed to me that women may view the severity of menstrual taboos differently from men.

One afternoon a Pokot man reproached me for washing in the place in the river where he wanted to fetch water. I later asked some women friends why he had done this. One of them answered by saying: "The dirt of a woman is different to that of a man. A woman's dirt is [more] unpleasant or 'bitter' [mwan; P’tiful or bitter]." Another woman quickly intervened and said, "That man was only being rude. His words are foolish. What about the women who wash in fciao [a location further up river]?". This case suggests not only that women are aware that men can use menstruation as a rationale for women’s subordination, *also that women regard menstruation as something dangerous and thus fearful.

Menstrual blood is one of the most important elements used by women in menstruation (menstrual blood can also be used by men, but is more often used by

Two of the most important ways menstrual blood is used are: 1) sckoi;
f"od of sorcery used by individual women against men. For example, it is believed that if a woman places the particular skirt she wears during graduation under her husband’s head while he is sleeping, then he will become obedient and willingly submit to the demands of his wife. 2) Botow: a method of birth control, which involves sealing into an animal horn a scraping of menstrual blood, vaginal and other private exuviae of the girl or woman concerned. The horn is preferably hidden, and until the contents are spilled out, the girl is tied and not able to conceive.

I have never heard a Pokot woman openly admit, or proudly state, that she used sokol against her husband. Instead, a wasan is accused of having done sokol to her husband if he is considered to be weak and indecisive. Otherwise the notion of sokol may be used as a joke to ridicule a man who is seen doing women's tasks. For example, if a man is seen grinding grain or fetching water people will say "kam nylnde sokol"; he has eaten sokol. The power of women's sorcery is said to make men more "womanlike". In this sense, sokol further identifies women, and particularly menstruation, with "weakness and silliness". It reinforces the existing ideas of pollution and the need to control women's reproductive powers. From a male point of view, if a man is accused of having eaten sokol it is meant as an accusation that he has not been able to control his wife.

However, even if sokol reinforces the accepted image of women as vulnerable, weak and silly; it must be remembered that sokol is something which women use against men. Although it is sometimes joked about it is also feared. It is regarded by both men and women that this type of individual sorcery is only used as a last resort. Women are extremely reluctant to discuss how sokol is actually performed, because it is considered to be something extremely secretive and socially unacceptable.

In their discussion of sexual antagonism among the Pokot and other quote a man sayir: "Ky own son wants to get together with his
to poison and bewitch me. A poisoning of a father by his wife and a
wicked just last month" (1964: 410). The poisoning referred to is not
clarified by Conant, but in the light of my own research data it would
to be an example of women's use of sokoi. During my fieldwork I did
not record any deaths which the Pokot attributed to women's use of sokoi, but
poisoning was expressed as an aspect of women's aorcery (although the
Ijii at 'poison' used was always left undefined). The actual result of
sorcery is unimportant. What is more significant is that men believe
fear women's use of sokoi and, although it is never openly discussed, it is
an accepted threat and tool women can use if they feel mistreated or abused.

It should be made clear that Pokot make a distinction between an
individually strong, knowledgeable woman whom they respect, and a woman who is
Hili to have gained her position of power in the household through the use
tfki. For example, Chermit's wife was considered to be a strong and powerful
wife and there was often a great deal of gossip about hem she ruled the house-
hold but, because (Permit was also known as a strong and influential elder,
there was never any suggestion that his wife had used sokoi against him. On
the other hand, Karita's wife was also known to rule her household but it was
generally agreed that she had bewitched her husband since he was known to be
and indecisive, especially regarding the affairs of the household,
'eluding the control over his children. A woman can also accuse another
of doing sokoi. For example, the second wife of Cheutoi accused his
wife (who
had run away and left him) of having bewitched her husband who
wealthy and at times completely incoherent. Both men and women can use
or blame others for using sokoi, as a means of readjusting the
voices if individuals have deviated from the social roles expected of them,
however, more often U3e sokoi, or the threat of sokoi, as a tool to
influence their husbands.

Now turn my discussion to rotow; the method of *psychological*
control. The use of rotow is interesting in itself, but particularly
^pertant regarding the question of control over women's reproductive powers.  

Can be dened by either men or women, although women are said to use rot tar far as arongst themselves. Rotow is most often used by mothers to •tie" their young daughters in an attempt to prevent them from conceiving l^oro they have oompleted their initiation rite. Married women can also use fto* to •tie" themselves so as not to conceive another child too quickly after ^Ting birth. It is also possible for men to use rotow to "tie" their wives if they have run sway, although men usually need the assistance of other women to obtain the scraping of menstrual blood and other necessary ingredients, for example, Lomwai is said to have used one of the reputedly stronger types of rotow after his wife left him because of frequent beatings. She had already given birth to one of Lomwai's children, but when she went and lived with another man for six years she was unable to conceive her lover's child, then (for a nixmber of reasons) she finally returned to Lanwai's home she conceived Lonwai's child after three months' time.

Prom the examples I have, it appears that men use rote* to try to reinstate their control over women's reproductive capacities primarily when women have deviated from the male social ideal. This also holds true In regard to •bortion. Certain elder women are known for their skill in being able to Perform abortions by pressing a woman's stomach and displacing the foetus as aste as two to three months into pregnancy. However, elders are also said to able to make a woman miscarry by performing a strong and secretive curse which they do when, in their view, an extreme breach of social conduct has been Cet^itted (for example, if a woman is known to have conceived after having an •iteroua affair with a close relative). Nonetheless, both the ability to ev@t and terminate conception is recognized by Pokot as being primarily the r*3ponsibility of women, and both are used far more frequently by women for ^u@sn, rather than by men trying to impose their control over women. It is, ho@w*

*yer, difficult to assess how often, and under what circumstances, women use rotow or abortion to their advantage and for their arm personal
Itiia is mainly because women are extremely reluctant to admit when they do so. I know, for example, various oases where individual girls had posan to abort rather than go through initiation and marry. Whatever the important point is that women can actually use these methods of rolling their reproductive powers if they wish. Also, women, but uninitiated girls, have a greater choice than men as to when and by their child will be fathered.

The fact that the social system gives women the chance to make these gboicas about childbearing, underwrites the accepted notions of maleness and paleness. Men are identified with social concerns while women's concerns revolve around their bodies and themselves as individuals (although how women choose to use their bodies to their advantage is based on their own self-perception of their sexuality, rather than the accepted or 'articulated' gender constructs). Through male initiation and the age-set system men focus their control of sexuality on other men, rather than trying to control female sexuality directly (see also Chapter V. pp 54-55). Furthermore, the fact that men do not actually enforce their control over girls' sexuality may be an inadvertent admission that they cannot do so. Female sexuality and the complex network of control which revolves around women's reproductive powers, is essentially in the hands of women. It is perhaps because of this recognition that male control of female sexuality is focused on their control of marriage: in their perceived control of the exchange of women for bridewealth, and through their control of the male age-set system.

Childbirth

From a woman's point of view, some of the taboos surrounding pregnancy are to be extremely practical. The fact that a wasan should not eat the meat of a dead cow, or that her husband should not go on a hunt, could be viewed as a type of protection for the woman who is in a physically vulnerable state. She is regarded as being physically vulnerable but she is also ritually arable, and must therefore be protected from ritual 'badness' or pollution.
that associated with the shadows of relatives who have recently
jp jren with respect to the idea of protection, however, the primary motive
(4t) jarpas to be that of men making an attempt to enforce their control
r women's childbearing capacities. The fact that only elders can absolve
peat and present mistakes of a pregnant woman and her lover, or lovers, is
fty of reinforcing male power and their control over women's reproductive
potential. However, this only occurs after the fact; in other words, after
the woman has already become pregnant. Also, usually in the case of uzxnarried
teen, it is up to the individual woman to admit to the various mistakes she
have committed. It is possible that if she has not had a difficult
pregnancy, and her birth does not become difficult, she will not admit to
bara had numerous sexual affairs. This is of course difficult to document
because women would probably never admit this even privately. Nevertheless, it
is significant that women are given the opportunity to remain quiet if no
complications develop. During parpara both the men and woman concerned must be
cleansed, although the cleansing ritual focuses on the woman who is considered
to be more vulnerable than the men. The fact that Pokot recognize women as
being more vulnerable may cloak the more fundamental idea that Pokot perceive
hrth as something ultimately out of their control and 'dangerous', not only in
'Physical/practical sense but also in a ritual sense. As a result, from both
aale and female point of view, pregnant women, and women with small children,
seen as needing ritual protection.

Sexual Intercourse

In a similar way as pregnant women are considered to be vulnerable, a
*nd her snail children are seen as needing ritual purification and

I taction if the woman conanits a sexual offence. A woman carries a great

Pansibiiity with her in believing that her child can become ill if she

ves sexually. Accordingly, it is primarily the responsibility of the
Pdual woman to decide when and if she wants to hav an adulterous affair,
it is necessary, to admit that she has done so. (this

cases of forced adultery, or raps. From the oase

picks I have collected, however, adultery more often involves a certain

injigness from both partners rather than forced rape.) Having the

responsibility of her children's welfare should (although it clearly does not)

a woman from sexually misbehaving, but in a similar sense it should also

p £ man from committing a sexual offence. This is especially true

rading the taboo which prohibits a husband and his wife from having sexual

intercourse when they have a small child. It is in the interest of the father

Such as the mother to keep their baby healthy. In this case, where a

gutual interest exists between husband and wife, there is also a great deal of

room for private negotiation between them. If a woman's child becomes ill she

her husband can decide to first cleanse the child privately and then, if

this has no effect, they can abstain from sexual intercourse.

The following is an excerpt from an interview with Cherimut in which she

describes the various forms the negotiation between a husband and wife might

take.

•A man will not be tough [force the woman to have sexual intercourse]

if he knows that the child is still small. But another day we can steal

each other ['stealing' is often used to describe sexual intercourse, but

usually when it takes place in situations which are considered socially

unacceptable]. When my child is only able to sit down, I take my husband

into the bush ... it is not at home. He tells me to bring his basket of

food to such and such a place. I take his food to that place and we

steal each other .... [if sexual intercourse takes place at home] you wake

up and say, 'it seems that my child has become sick'. The man says, 'you

stay and look after our child here [telling the woman to stay at home

rather than going to work on the fields]. Tes, will you not do those

*ords then [ritually cleanse the child by smearing his/her joints] ....

[If the child becomes seriously ill], then the man asks, 'are those [the

gickness of the child] because of the sins we did the other night?'. And

then he goes for a month, for a long time, until he sees that the child

has power [the husband will not try to have sexual intercourse with his

ife until their child is healthy again]."

In

the above excerpt Cherimut suggests that it is better for Pokot to have

sexual intercourse away from the child concerned. This way the shadow and the

ess associated with the act will be less likely to affect the child.

•TO, most people specify the sexual act itself, wherever it might take
making the child vulnerable to ailleness. This is confirmed by the
that the shadow of anyone who has had a sexual relation the previous
should not fall on a young baby. In describing the details of how it
light occur that a couple has sexual intercourse at home, Cherimut says that a
wife can tell her husband to "pour the sperm outside" (practising coitus
interruptus) for one night, but the next night because the man has not been
Mjified, they will have complete sexual intercourse whether the woman insists
on coitus interruptus or not. In the interview, Cherimut also goes on to
gxplain that if the child becomes seriously ill the man and woman may decide to
take the child to be smeared by a kololian, rather than only smearing hi^ae
privately at home.

The various details of the above abstract serve as a summary to some of
the points I have raised so far. The example points out that, although
various social laws exist, men and women may work privately at finding ways
around them. Early on in Cherimut's explanation, it appears that it is the
toon who has the most interest in protecting her child, and she therefore
"takes" her husband into the bush. However, the arrangement itself is
actually made between the husband and his wife, with the husband telling his
wife where to meet him and her agreeing to do so. The mutual interest of the
husband and wife are revealed in the fact that the man does not force the woman
to have sexual intercourse. Instead, they arrange together the most suitable
to do so, and if the child becomes ill, they decide together what to do and
whether it is necessary to abstain from sexual intercourse or not.

She prohibition which "forbids" women with small children from having
sexual intercourse, also serves as a method of birth control and helps to
^4tain the usual two to three year age difference preferred between the
^dren of one woman. Even without this prohibition, the limited Pokot diet,
fact that children are usually not weaned until they are two to three
old, makes it physically very difficult for women to produce healthy
more frequently than once every two years. It is now generally accepted

US
lactation itself functions to space out the interval between successful
births (p. Short: 1976). The time between births varies, however, with the
liferent circumstances and physiology of each individual woman concerned.

It is therefore unlikely that Pokot women ovulate soon after birth, which
interests light on *rlwoi*; the ritual which must be performed if a
woman conceives before completing three menstruation periods. This custom is
particular to the Pokot. For example, amongst the Hamar of Ethiopia, if a
woman conceives before completing two menstruation periods and various
coinciding rituals, the child will have to be aborted or killed at birth. In
Pokot, *rlwoi* is possibly an additional way of assuring that there is an
efficient space between consecutive births. *Hiwoi*, and the taboos forbidding
sexual intercourse for women having small children, are both examples of
ritual prohibitions which in some ways respect or protect women's childbearing
capacities and can thus be seen as advantageous to women. Women sometimes use
these prohibitions as bargaining tools when they do not wish to have sexual
intercourse. On the other hand, if women do want to have sexual intercourse
they can easily do so by finding a way around these prohibitions, such as
cleansing their child privately. It is significant that men and women are both
involved in various aspects of controlling women's reproductive power, and it
is probable that both sexes impose these prohibitions on themselves and each
other for different reasons.

A different view of Pokot sexuality is discussed by R. Edgerton and
Conant who claim that Pokot women are sexually unsatisfied, and that the high
degree of sexual antagonism found in Pokot is due to "the pronounced disjunction
the emphasis placed on the full expression of female sexuality in adolescence
and the subsequent restrictions of female sexuality in married life" (1966: 417). The
many private interviews and discussions which I had with married and
women I would suggest that Pokot women clearly enjoy sex (see also
Edgerton and Conant, 1966: 409) for a number of different reasons, but the fact that
•mress their sexual 'frustration' oould also be seen as an expression
I know of one woman who often complained about her husband's sexual
fortaance in public. Although this was publicly frowned upon, end it is
贾ult to say how this embarrassment affected her husband, it later
iiæ known that her complaints helped to attract a number of men with when
then had adulterous affairs. It would also be impossible to documented how

earried women actually have sexual intercourse by managing to negotiate
riratsly the various ritual restrictions with their husbands and lovers, but
fissa the number of cases which became public, it appears that adultery is a
frequent occurrence.

The other difficulty in Edgerten and Conant's argument is that it fails
to take into account that sexual satisfaction is defined very differently in
different cultures. Pokot women insist that they feel the most "heat" or
sexual excitement when they are trying to conceive a child, the ultimate
•dinar being the moment of conception (the "heat" is described as coming
from a wanan's "stomach" where the komong; ovaries are "opening and closing
their mouths anxiously trying to catch the sperm"). Women may express this
for a number of different reasons, for example, as a way of showing their
acceptance of the social significance placed on them as childbearers. However,
if this is

what Pokot women 'say' gives them sexual pleasure, it is not for us
to 'say' that it is actually an expression of their sexual frustration. Also,
data suggest that women have, and Usæ, the opportunity to do something about
hir sexual 'frustration' when they feel inclined to do so. Although Pokot
women may use their sexuality in different ways, sexual satisfaction in
Articular is not a significant issue for the Pokot, nor is it important for my
analysis defining gender constructs. Conant's focus and analysis of these
brings to light our own cultural preoccupation with these ideas in
society. Many of our ideas about sexual satisfaction stem from the
notion of romantic love which is non-existent in Pokot marriages.

women in western society hope to get affection and personal satisfaction
the relationship with their husbands. Pokot women receive most of this
the close relationship they have with their children.

It is common for married Pokot women to have adulterous relationships.

Agerton and Conant point out (1974: [Pokot] wives maintain
\[\text{oral adulterous relationships at any given time}]. Amongst themselves, a
\[\text{up of women might scorn or ridicule other women who have "hot vaginas" and}
\[\text{ly flaunt their sexuality, but in the presence of men they seem to remain}
and ignore the issue. Although women usually have little say in the
\[\text{community council, when a case of adultery is discussed at a council meeting}
\[\text{e adulteress may be asked to review her side of the case. At this point}
\[\text{other women often give their opinions and details of the case even though they}
\[\text{are supposed to remain quiet. From the cases of adultery I have recorded, it}
\[\text{is extremely rare for women to give evidence against each other, either}
\[\text{privately when asked by men, or publicly at the community council meetings.}

However, in comparison with what U. Llewelyn-Davies reports about Uaasai
toem (1973), Pokot women are less absolute in giving their full support to each
other in their adulterous relationships. In Pokot, it can happen that adultery
causes conflict amongst the women themselves as well as between men and women.
\[\text{For example, in the case of KokomaSinyang (see also 17.1: C p. /Cp\}) after}
\[\text{he finally admitted to having adulterous relations with three men of the Katuw}
\[\text{nammity, the case was discussed at council and each man was fined one}
\[\text{he wives of the three men became so enraged that they gathered with the}
\[\text{women of Katuw and beat KokomaSinyang. Although this is the only case I}
\[\text{recorded in which women acted against another woman for having committed}
\[\text{adultery, it is important because the women decided amongst themselves to act}
\[\text{settled}
\[\text{reinforcing the male ideal: one of the thanes they emphasize in}
\[\text{initiation rituals often oc}

17-1
who is blamed and must pay a fine which she usually begs for

(Llewelyn-Davie, 1978: 233), while in Pokot it is the man who

has an adulterous relationship, his wife l

footed directly. By contrast, in Pokot, a man who has an adulterous

#lations must pay a fine thereby depleting his herd: the same herfl

LIVESTOCK that his wife and children are dependent on. For this reason a

Pokot wife may feel antagonistic towards both her husband and the woman

had as adulterous relationship with. Llewelyn-Daviea concludes that t

mpport Maasai women give to each other in 'adultery', is a form of woe.

solidarity which attacks male superiority (1978: 235). In Pokot, all

Toen do not openly give evidence against each other, a case of adulterer

erase conflict between women which hinders their solidarity as a group.

Nonetheless, Pokot women use their sexuality freely and seem to recogn^ 1

laplicitly (individually and as a group) that this can disrupt the patu

order and cause conflict between men. It does not escape recognition ^

men and women that it can be beneficial if a woman has an adulterous r

nth a wealthy stockholder. If a wife commits adultery, the fine will
to her husband and this will eventually benefit both her husband and h

Pokot say that a husband and his wife are conspiring together to get w

tm

* a husband shows no anger towards his wife after she has committed ac

& interesting case was that between Meriongor and Kapkai. Meriongor**

adulterous relationship with Kapkai's wife, and because he was still

Carried and living at home, the bulk of the fine was paid by Meriong^ 1

lemony, a few months later, Meriongor's wife became drunk and fell at

rjnext to Kapkai's brother. When he approached her sexually she ma

tten-fi p t to dismiss him, but they did not actually have sexual intercom^ 3

se v wrought to council and it was decided that Kapkai's brother a

Go to the elders so they could perform the blessing to •finish t

V ta < interesting, however, is that Meriongor's wife then jxiblicly

*hev, *aen Present that if her daughter had not recently gone through,
who blamed and must pay a fine which she usually begs from her husband (Llawelyri-Darrieu 1978: 233), while in Pokot it is the man who is blamed and must pay a fine which he usually begs from his wife (1978: 233), while in Pokot it is the man who is blamed and must pay a fine which he usually begs from his wife.

In Maasai, if a man has an adulterous relationship, his wife is not affected directly. By contrast, in Pokot, a man who has an adulterous relationship must pay a fine thereby depleting his herd: the same herd of livestock that his wife and children are dependent on. For this reason a pokot wife may feel antagonistic towards both her husband and the woman he has had an adulterous relationship with. Llewelyn-Darrieu concludes that the private Maasai women give to each other in adultery, is a form of women's solidarity which attacks male superiority (1978: 235). In Pokot, although women do not openly give evidence against each other, a case of adultery may cause conflict between women which hinders their solidarity as a group. Nonetheless, Pokot women use their sexuality freely and seem to recognise implicitly (individually and as a group) that this can disrupt the patriarchal order and cause conflict between men. It does not escape recognition by Pokot men and women that it can be beneficial if a woman has an adulterous relationship with a wealthy stockholder. If a wife commits adultery, the fine will be paid to her husband and this will eventually benefit both her husband and herself. Pokot say that a husband and his wife are conspiring together to get more stock if a husband shows no anger towards his wife after she has committed adultery.

An interesting case was that between Meriongor and Kapkai. Meriongor's son had an adulterous relationship with Kapkai's wife, and because he was still Carried and living at home, the bulk of the fine was paid by Meriongor. At a ceremony, a few months later, Meriongor's wife became drunk and fell asleep on a next to Kapkai's brother. When he approached her sexually she made no real effort to dismiss him, but they did not actually have sexual intercourse. The case was brought to council and it was decided that Kapkai's brother should pay a fine to the elders so they could perform the blessing to "finish tae words", that is, interesting, however, is that Meriongor's wife then publicly told the women present that If her daughter had not recently gone through rotwa;
Idotomy (thus being in seclusion and in a weak and vulnerable state), she did not have dismissed Kapkai’s brother’s approach. She announced that she had had sexual intercourse with Kapkai’s brother in order to “return the ^ taken by Kapkai’s family”. Although this particular case may be interpreted as something of a vendetta, it nonetheless indicates a woman’s virility of the possibility of using her sexuality for the economic gain of ^ her and her husband.

Ibis Is in contrast to the Maasai where, although it may be economically liantageous for the husband if his wife commits adultery, it is disadvantageous for the wife. She is not only beaten, but if her agnates cannot help her pay her fine her husband can take the stock from her allocated herd. As Llewellyn-Davies reports (1978: 233), when two wives of a laibon had obtained the full fine of nine head of cattle for their husband they claimed that it “made his a rich man”. Amongst the Maasai, and the pastoral Pokot, there is a clearer distinction made between a woman’s allocated herd and her husband’s herd than amongst the agricultural Pokot. This is due both to the higher degree of polygyny and the far larger herds of livestock found amongst the pastoralists. However, Llewelyn-Davies gives little account of the movements ^ade in Maasai between the husband’s herd and his wives’ allocated herds. The only comment she makes is that women do not own livestock, so that a husband ^ take livestock from his wives’ allocated herds whenever he wishes to do so. Not only raises the question of how a wife can really pay a fine if she not own any cattle (especially if the fine should be taken from her Seated herd), but also whether the cattle a woman obtains from her agnates, ^ re then added to her husband’s herd, do not eventually benefit her and her .

Es. Among the pastoral Pokot, there is continual movement and exchange B ^ ^ the wives’ allocated herds and that of their husband (especially in ^ of drought and difficulty), with the husband having ultimate authority PU the IV.I
la ouoh smaller. Here, it is far clearer how a fine paid for adultery benefits both the husband and his wife economically. Pokot agricultural society's way of attacking sale superiority, by using other men's teens of benefiting their self-esteem, but, it is interesting that they also use adultery to benefit the economic position of themselves as well as their husbands. Maasai women, on the other hand, view adultery as an attack on their superiority, which benefits their self-esteem but hurts them economically to the advantage of their husbands. This suggests that amongst the agricultural fokot, where survival is dependent on small productive units, women recognize the need of maintaining a complementary relationship between husband and wife despite the tensions that exist between them;

g. **Tumba nama:** A Collective Statement of Sexual Pride

*Tumba nama* (turn: song or ceremony, nama: to catch or capture) is a practice which enables women of one neighbourhood or region to take collective action stating their pride in their sexuality. Only a brief summary of the main aspects of this practice are given here, as a detailed account has already been reviewed by B. Edgerton and P. Coiat (1980). In the area where I worked, what Edgerton and Conant know as kilapat was referred to as tumbanama. Essentially, **tumba nama** is performed if a man or a woman radically misbehaves towards his/her spouse, for example, if a man abuses his wife verbally by yelling insults at her such as, "let maggots grow in your vagina", or if he is wilfully and continually drunk. Although both men and women can do *tumba* it is performed far more frequently by women against their husbands than men. If a woman is abused by her husband, she will gather together the neighbours (sometimes including friends from the wider region), go as a group to ridicule her husband until he agrees to pay them a cow *Sc-t for his mistake. To ridicule and shame the accused husband, the t' \ * up and taunt him with sexually obscene songs and gestures. A * Ardener reports (1977: ^2) that this type of collective action by women
unusual in Africa, and aha cites the Pokot material as being particularly

for the Pokot, especially the concept that if a man abuses his wife, the
covers all other women and not just the individual woman abused. As
women demonstrate not on behalf of the victim but for themselves as a

In Pokot, "tumba nama," as well as women's initiation,
individual and solidarity between women of one neighbourhood.

3. Ardener also suggests that many of the 'vulgar' actions she reports are

performed by women to demonstrate the dignity of their asexual identity, a
concept which they consider to be valuable and beautiful (1977: 34). Various
obscene songs and gestures in Pokot women's initiation reflect women's awareness of, and pride in, their own sexuality, and their actions during "tumba nama"
strongly reaffirm this idea. Here, women as a group are taking a positive
stance and refusing to let men abuse their sexuality. "Tumba nama," when
performed by women, is an organised action by women expressing their opposition
to the abuse of male control.

Like the collective obscenities women engage in during their initiation
rite, "tuaifa nama" also reflects the sexual antagonism and struggle characteristic
Pokot marriages. Although there are many similarities between the two
actions, the collective obscenity women engage in during "tumba nama" is performed
for the specific purpose of resolving marital conflict, whereas women's
initiation does not serve such purpose. Although there may be many difficulties
involved in doing so, women often make use of the various alternatives open to
their marriage situation if unbearable. However, using these
alternatives becomes more impracticable for women as they get older and have a

of children, and, whatever the case, it is far more difficult for a woman
to get

of a marriage than it is for a man. Probably the main reason men do
not resort to using "tumba"
as often as women do, is because they have more
got seans deal lug with marital conflict.

S. Ardener suggests that the action of collective obscenity itself presses an opposition to male control, but what she fails to point out is that actions do not necessarily oppose or threaten male control in the long run. In Pokot, women's actions work towards resolving marital conflict and thereby provide a tribute to the maintenance of the established social order. This is also true for some of the examples which Ardener cites herself: amongst the Lele, as a group punish any married woman who has run away with her lover (1977: 48), which is clearly an example of women upholding the male social order and tellies, rather than expressing their opposition to it.

For this reason, I question the aspect of S. Ardener's conclusion where she claims that there is probably a strong similarity between the present women's liberation movement and the actions taken by the Bakweri and other African women (1977: 49). As Ardener suggests, perhaps at a deep structural level of self-identification there are similarities between the two (ibid.), but if I understand the goals of the women's liberation movement correctly, they include a firm desire to change the accepted male stereotypes. Ardener defines the concerns of the women's liberation movement in the same way (1977: 44), but she does not then apply this definition to the Bakweri or Pokot examples. In Pokot, although women express their opposition to male control and go against the accepted stereotypes by a demonstration of collective obscenity, they do little actually to change these stereotypes but rather tend to confirm male control in the long run.

3. An Analysis of Male and Female Perspectives

As we have seen, there are many different pollution taboos and cleansing rituals concerning women's sexuality and fertility. Most of the taboos concern women's childbearing capacities, and limit women's activities in a number of ways. When any pollution taboo is broken, women and their small Udrysn are more directly affected than men. However, it would be incorrect
that men impose these taboos onto women, or that Pokot men consider
be lesser beings because of their childbearing capacities. Hen end
not only here different attitudes about female sexuality and fertility,
si so about the various pollution taboos. Furthermore, the taboos are
manipulated by both men and women. This allows for an
tr* of private negotiation which ia of particular importance in the husband/
fj's relationship.

In the broader view of gender constructs, it is significant that if a
man misbehaves sexually, it is said that she and her children will be
adversely affected, whereas a man's sexual misbehaviour is said to affect his
wealth, in particular his herds. This distinction corresponds and reinforces
the distinction between a woman's perspective, which revolves primarily around
herself and her children, and a man's perspective, which revolves around his
wealth and his herd. Within the generally held model of Pokot society, the
sale perspective, or the values held to be important by men, are predominant, but,
is practice, the importance placed on male and female perspectives and values
oioillate as circumstances change. Within the context of either only male or
only female interactions, however, the values and perspective held to be most
important are sex specific. In this sense, the pollution taboos, and the
lotions taken to cleanse individuals if they have broken the taboos, reinforcs
separate male and female values and, are generally, the notions of maleness
tod femaleness.

It appears that, to maintain a position of apparent dominance, Pokot men
continually reinforce their image of self-importance. They do this in a number
ys, including articulating and repeatedly asserting the various prohibitions
concepts of pollution. Men articulate the point of view that women are
ordinate to themselves because of their childbearing capacities, which are
o as dangerous and polluting. It must be noted, however, that the Pokot
osething 'dangerous' as something 'powerful', precisely because it is
their complete control. Just as childbirth is considered 'dangerous*', so
The ancestral spirits, and Just as men are considered "powerful" because their influence over anoestral spirits, so, by isylication, must women be considered 'powerful' because of their influence over childbirth. However, oar publicly articulate this idea and, in fact, the notion that childbirth is a potent source of women's power, is deliberately muted through various concepts of pollution.

In so far as childbirth may be existed with life, ancestral spirits may be Efsusted with death. Women are not, however, entirely excluded from either the sphere of ancestral spirits or of death. Hiwol woman are a case in point, it already mentioned. If a woman has an 'abnormal' birth (for the Pokot, a breech birth, twina, or a "black" child born before a woman has completed three Infantuation periods) she, and the child, will have to be cleansed through the elaborate ritual of riwoi; a way of bringing the abnormal birth back under social control. As a result of this cleansing, a riwoi woman has special powers, the most important of which is that she and her husband have the ritual power to cleanse others after death. This is done by the riwoi woman smearing fat onto the feet of the female relations of the deceased, while her husbandears the feet of the male relations.

Another case in point is that, when a child is born, a woman normally Identifies the protecting ancestral spirit of that child. Onyot; ancestral spirits play an important part in Pokot ideas of life and death. Every Pokot baby is said to be protected by one particular ancestral spirit. A few days after baby is born, an older woman identifies the protecting ancestral spirit of the baby in the ceremony of ketkotoi (kotkotoi is only very occasionally worked by aen for male babies only). At death, a person's spirit is said to depart from her body and to join the other ancestral spirits. Y There are different accounts of how and why the ancestral spirits manifest themselves, but most Pokot say that they are an ever present force in Pokot life. Some people go so far as saying that onyot hold council at the birth of every baby, and decide the child's character and fate. Others
iij that onyot are present every day, helping to guide people end make visions, or conversely causing people harm or illness, for example if they should to observe taboos, quarrel with one another, or fail to pay respect to the ancestors. There are a number of different occasions when the elders and the community try to control the ancestral spirits, by ostracizing those which the/ have identified as causing sickness or misfortune, and invoking others to provide protection and bring good fortune.

Is this brief account shows, the ritual roles which women and men have regarding ancestral spirits, are complementary and correspond to the distinction between birth and death. Thus, women identify and invoke the protective ancestral spirits at birth, while men identify and invoke ancestral spirits at moments of sickness or misfortune in order to avert death and disaster.

In conclusion to this chapter, it could be said that, although Pokot men always say that women are polluted and subordinate because of their childbearing capacities, at the same time they recognize implicitly the importance of women as childbearers for the reproduction of Pokot society. In this way, they silently acknowledge the complementary interdependence of the sexes, and that the female sphere is just as important as the male sphere to the survival of Pokot society. There is, however, a clear dichotomy between what men overtly and what they covertly accept. It is as though men and women are able to understand quite different messages encoded in the same social ideals and. We now turn to examine female initiation in the light of the different messages it can be seen to encode.
Chapter IT


The Pokot word for person is chi. Usually these words are used in reference to men. When there is any doubt about whether these words refer to men and/or women, the narrator will qualify the statement, as in the instance of this myth a person is qualified as a man.

I only heard of this taboo in this very specific sense. However, P. Frisiany (1975: 187) suggests that the shadow of a menstruating woman is also considered polluting. This taboo would mean that a menstruating woman, and close relatives of the deceased, are considered to be equally polluting.

I was never told the specific significance of using the burnt earth of the hearth and mother's urine as a blessing. However, the hearth can be seen as a symbol of domestic well being, for example, blessings must be performed over the hearth before bridewealth negotiations are allowed to begin and at noaioi the final marriage ceremony. Urine is used more generally to bless sexual offenders, such as blessing men before they go on a hunt, which is discussed later. It is interesting that, in Pokot, saliva is most commonly used to bless, and to note that urine and saliva are both bodily secretions.

It is said by Pokot that, if the shadow of either of two men who have both had sexual intercourse with the same girl or woman during one menstrual cycle, should fall upon the other, one of them may become sick and die. P. Frisiany (1951: 287) also mentions this prohibition, adding that the two in such a relationship should not help each other if one is wounded, because the touch of the other man's blood may result in death.

Personal communication, J. Iydall.

In a similar context, Edgerton and Conant (1964: 414) noted that, if a woman is known to exceed sexual moderation, she can be beaten by older women. According to Edgerton and Conant (1964), the word kilaat, something tly organised, was used in Kuino and Hasol to describe what people

ISO
This chapter is an examination of the women’s initiation rite among the agricultural Pokot. Women’s Initiation is the single most important ritual for Pokot women. It is a complex and elaborate ritual, performed around the c of puberty, which legitimises the change of status from girlhood to womanhood as a prelude to marriage. Amongst the agricultural Pokot, the major purpose of female Initiation is the conferral of the right to procreative sex.

In her detailed analysis of a female initiation rite, Richards states that one can use a number of different approaches when interpreting a complex oremcoy (1956: 112). In the analysis which follows, xj focus is the manner in which women’s Initiation expresses and dramatises the socio-economic roles of women and the relation between the akses. This is examined from the eminent male perspective, looking at the way in which women’s Initiation is a mechanism of status granting and role assumption, and questioning the extent to which women’s Initiation can be seen as a way of bringing women’s procreative powers under social control. xj principal focus, however, is an examination of women’s Initiation from a female perspective or point of view. The Initiation rite is significant because it is the principal way Pokot women as a group socialise Pokot girls into womanhood. Is such, it is the most important recurrent articulation by Pokot women of the female perspective. By Investigating the Initiation rite we examine what Pokot women say women should be.

Sexuality, already discussed as being one of women’s main bargaining is also the focal point of paradoxical themes expressed by women in Initiation rite. On the one hand, older women teach the initiates the Pted mode of behaviour, thereby tmdercritising the c n i r r t social order end
control, while, on the other, women make a statement of their separate
solidarity and power, which focuses on the use and control of their sexuality*
fibes® two contrasting themes of women's subordination and power, are described
they are portrayed in the events and actions throughout the three month
initiation rite, and the significance of women articulating these two
contradictory themes is later examined and analysed. The analysis not only
Includes the way in which male and female perspectives are voiced and
incorporated in the rite, but also how, and to what extent, the female
perspective (which can differ from the male perspective) is communicated to
the men so as to become validated and acknowledged.

The description and analysis which follow are based on some fifteen
initiation ceremonies which I attended and recorded on tape. The tapes were
later translated and further questions were asked in a number of extended
interviews with Pokot women. (There were also interviews with Pokot men in
which I discussed male and female initiation, but these were less frequent.)
The statements quoted have been chosen as representative of recurring themes.

T.1. Women's Initiation Rite: A Description

It is up to the individual girl to decide when she wishes to undergo the
initiation ordeal. Initiation occurs every year in different neighbourhoods,
and is primarily an event involving the women of one neighbourhood, but women
of the wider community may also participate. Most girls decide to be initiated
around the age of puberty, some just before their first menstruation and
others slightly later. Although it is an individual decision, and the
initiation rite can be held for one girl, it is more common that three to five
friends of similar age from one community decide to go through
initiation together as one group. Before initiation, Pokot girls, or ti^in,
*joy sexual freedom and carry on a number of flirtations with lovers of their
choice. However, after initiation, a woman is expected to marry, stay with
** husband of whom her parents have approved, and who has paid the bridewealth
areata have requested. It is only after the completion of initiation that
is 'allowed' to produce a child. In fact, if a tipin becomes pregnant
initiation, she will usually undergo initiation soon after conception,
that she becomes a woman, or mrar, before giving birth.' Pokot sen and woman
th claim that the primary purpose of female initiation, is to legitimise a
go of status from immature girlhood to mature womanhood. Male initiation
^oxel the Pokot involves a similar change of status for men, and there are
y striking similarities in the sequence of events and content of the two
(summarized in T.2i B).
Women's initiation rite is a two to three month ordeal which involves
clitoridotomy, a period of semi-seclusion, and the public presentation of the
new women in the final stages of various coming-out ceremonies. These
three stages have many features in common with the three stages of separation,
segregation and Integration, described by Yan Gennep (19^0) In his discussion of
transition rites* The various stages and events of the initiation rite are
controlled and organized by the women of one neighbourhood and region. The
ritual knowledge contained In the initiation rite is cumulative, and it is only
after women become older that they are allowed to perform, and learn about, the
complex meanings attached to various secret parts of the rite*

Sotwa (Knife): The Ceremony of Clitoridotomy

Clitoridotomy of girls is a public ceremony, held at the home of one of the
Vitiates, and attended by a large crowd of men and women from the surrounding
who gather to enjoy the social occasion. People begin to gather for the
Vision in the afternoon, singing and dancing through the night until the
Vitiates go through clitoridotoajy at dawn the following morning. There is a
deal of excitement and tension in the air, as people watch to see if
will be able to maintain the required posture* without showing any
° f pain when she sits on the stone and is quickly cut by Kokoaelkong* (a
jpwuar woman in the community who is known to be professional in performing
^°Krination of clitoridotoay).
Kotoe elkeng, the Initiates, end their mothers and fathers, are easily distinguished from the rest of the crowd because of the special ornaments they wear. Around 5.00 a.m., a group of older women and the initiates gather in a small text separating themselves from the rest of the people attending the ceremony. Packed closely together is the confines of the small but, women sit swaying gently to the slow aelodio 'songs of dawn'. Women sing the refrain while one of the older women leads the songs with impromptu verses referring to the Individual histories of the initiates, and the ordeal they are about to go through.

Each song is different and they vary greatly depending on who is leading or pulling the song. However, there are a few major themes which recur frequently in the 'songs of dawn'. Probably the most prevalent theme expressed, is that the girls should withstand the operation bravely so that they do not bring shame to themselves and their families. The leader makes constant references to the fact that the girl should "protect" her family and refers to both the initiate's father and patrilineage, and to her aether. For example, she usually mentions by name the initiate's olan, her brothers and her father: 'How look at that daughter of Kapuntua'. She also makes references to her aether: "Look at the tenda of your mother, don't neglect it" alluding to the fret that the initiate's aether cannot wear the traditional ritual tenda (head-band) if her daughter cries out or flinches during the public excision.

There are repeated warnings about the harsh pain caused by the quick slash of the knife. The emphasis women put on the difficulty of withstanding the pain can be seen as a way of testing the girl's individual willpower and termination to go through with the rite. The songs stress that girls have to go through this alone and have the "strength of heart" to do so - no one can help them the moment the public operation of olitoridotcoy takes place: 'To cut needs heart from you alone'. The girls are also constantly reminded of the fact that all the other women present have managed to withstand the pain.

*tiaa br&vsly: ^t the women sitting under the tree ... you must take
Another theme women tend to sing about is that the girls should not be lured astray by the temptations of Oiteri*1 goods, and the different way of life in the townships and road ðøøpe jbloh now exist throughout the Pokot area: "I say Chupa [girl's name] do not be proud of your whistlo. Do not be proud of your blanket." Women see godemizstion ** threat to their control over the young girls and the traditional values which they are trying to teach them.

Just as the first rays of light are beginning to appear on the horizon the final preparations for oliteridoto'y are made. Older wmten place a number of large flat stones in a row outside the hut, while men force the crowd back with sticks to clear an area round the stones. In the hut the women sing their last songs about the fact that dawn has arrived, using special words and phrases particular to women's initiation. During these songs the initiate whose house the ceremony is being held at, carries some grass rolled in a large skin (which she will sleep on during her seclusion period) in and out of the house four times. The moment this is finished the girls undress (except for three special ornamental belts), have cold water poured down the front of their bodies, leave the hut and run to the stones.

It the stones each girl sits with opened legs, head thrown back looking at the sky, and both arms stretched straight out in the air. Kokomelkon* takes hold of the labia minora, flicks the girl's vagina with her finger, and cuts off the prepuce and part of the labia minora in one or two quick slashes. The girl is then allowed to lower her head to the ululation r* lpfcomelkoi* which is the sign that the girl has successfully undergone the fation. Kokonelken* must cut any girl who sits on the stones in the posture mentioned. Any girl who cries out in pain or tries to run away will be f*uled by the crowd, but she will still be out even if people have to hold her down. A girl who cries out during the public operation can never, even as an older woman, attend the more secret aspects of the initiation rite, and passes her seclusion period without any elaborate ceremony on her own.
It frequently happens that girls posh their way through the crowds and may 0 through olitoridetmy against their family's wishes. Usually, approximately pif of the girls who are out at the ceremony, are girls who run out fro® the "j"rd without giving any previous warning, or formally announcing that they fgl do so. If a girl's friends are initiated she will usually join them even if the is younger than the rest. Initiation is seen by the girls as a way of poring their maturity and gaining social status and respect. It is customary for the girls (around the age of puberty) from each neighbourhood to attend the rotwa of nearby neighbourhoods. If the families of a group of girls from the òáae neighbourhood have refused to hold rotwa for then, the girls often decide to go through initiation together and all 'run to the stones' when rotwa occurs in a nearby neighbourhood. The family of a girl may not wish her to be Initiated for the following reasons: they feel that she is too young to be Initiated and will not be sble to withstand the pain; that she is too young to marry and they do not wish to lose an Important labourer In the boma hold; or simply because they do not hare the wealth required to pay for the expenses of the different stages and ceremonies of the Initiation rite.

After the last girl has been cut, the older men and women of the crowd begin to sing. The women end mothers of the Initiates more towards the men wring their arms In the air, and bless the fathers and male relations of the Vitiates by smearing them with milk. This is done a few times, with the Vitiates later joining in the group of women when they walk towards the men. The songs mention that the girls hare now been cut, should "mind the words and °°ioe of women" and have honoured their fathers.

As the crowd disperses, the blood spilled by the Initiates Is covered with and they are led to a private place in the shade where the old mothers at the outs made by Kokomelkong. Pokot women say that the) 'correct' the I** taking sure that both sides of the labia are cut straight and evenly so the two sides are sble to heal together to form a smooth and even soar.
• oorreation’ la very painful, often involving another one or two minutes of
ingiving parts of the labia majors, minor* end the prepuce and tip owring the
jltori** The clitoris, more precisely, the shaft of the olitoris, is sot out.
first women refer to this as a ‘vein” saying that if the olitoris were out the
girl would bleed to death and die. During the second cutting, the girls are
gfoally held down by women and are not ridiculed when they openly express their
pain. When the cutting is finally ospleted, the breast milk of a woman, who
feu not lost any ohildren, and who is suckling a female child, is put on the
ypund to ‘cool* it down* The Juice of a pipi plant is also squeezed on the
found.

Groups of girls and wasen then begin their Journey hose, which may be some
three to four miles away if any of the girls have come from different
neighbourhoods. On the way hone women begin singing songs particular to
vossn’s initiation and the seclusion period. The refrain of these songs has a
special ritual language, while the leader of the song centimes to call out
phrases referring to the history of a particular girl. The Initiates and most
of the women (with the exception of a few older women) do not know the meaning
of the songs which gives the songs an esoteric quality. Along their way hose,
If the women should meet a woman from their neighbourhood who did not attend
the ceremony, they will pretend to beat her as a way of showing that she should
have been an active participant in a ceremony involving one of ‘their’ girls
from the beginning.

When the girl reaches home she and her father (if he was not present at
’e ceremony) are blessed with milk while more initiation scngs are sung (the
**** song is also sung at the conclusion of moi (from word oi: ancestor or
T0rit), a ceremony done to appease the ancestors in case of sickness, and
‘tions that the father can now ”open the path - or gate - to let the oows
’ home” aa a sign that all has gone well). The moment the Initiate enters
hut she begins her period of seclusion. From then on the hut Itself is
** by womea. The father most find somewhere else to asleep aa he, plus
•zi
The Seoliom Period

For the first few days after elitoridoto the girl should lie as still as possible. She lies on a special akin with graaa keeping her legs together so the two outside of her vaginal lips meet and eventually join together to form a sroat soar. The sroat is formed over the shaft of the olitoria (and sometimes over the urethral orifice so that the urine passes underneath the sroat) making the vaginal opening a little smaller than it was before. She should not drink water until her wound has healed, and may not touch any food with her hands (her mother will either feed her or she will pick up her food with a stick). She is now known as a chamarel, shares her hair, covers her face with ash, and rears a kolika (large skin, made of several goat skins sawn together) which hides or deforms the shape of her body. She is rarely left alone, as women constantly come in and out of the hut to see how aha is and make sure she is being fed properly. For the first four nights after elitoridoto all the women of the neighbourhood gather to sing the special ritual songs of seclusion.

On the fourth or fifth day an old woman comes to do lapow (from lapa: to sash). It this time the body and wound of the chemeron is washed with rater which has had certain leaves boiled in it (songowo, manampellon, or moywon depending on the area). After the washing of lapow the chemeron is strictly forbidden to wash during her seclusion period (if the wound gets infected the Juice of plpi leaves will be applied). The old woman then measures the ch*m*rlon by spitting chewed moigut root on her hands, and around the upper part of her body while repeating the words "sweet, sweet, thanks, thanks". Having completed lapow the chameleon is allowed to eat with her own hands and go outside without covering her head with her kolika.

The wounds of the girls heal in approximately two weeks' time (unless the sides are crooked and thus do not join properly, in which case the girl
bar* to bo out again). Wm a girl'a wound has healed enough for it not
w split open when she walla, she and the ether Initiates go to oolleet a white
\^alk whioh they air with water and naear over their entire bodies every
\^orning. Tram this tine onwards the ohameri usually stay together as a
\( g'p \) during the day. Thqy sit and talk while the various ornaments
\( \text{tattired daring their seolusion period (for exsparle, a rope belt, a kind of}
\text{fettle so they can be heard when tfty are approaching, eto.), or walk togethar}
narrying their sltot (particular long branohea fron a sitet tree which the
\( \text{ohameri smear white) to wave at passers-by who should give then some small}
token.

Throughout their seolusion period oheneri are considered to be polluted or
clean, but they are considered to be nost 'dangerous' before their wound has
healed,at which tine they are restricted by the same taboos aa a wonan during
\text{senstrustion or one who has Just given birth. Scae of these restrictions are
lifted later (for example, after lapow and after the wound heals) and the
\( \text{chaseri} \) help with a few of the nore simple domestic tasks, such as gathering
\text{firewood, or grinding and cooking aaise. There are also many restrictions
which are particular to a ohenerion, for example she must use her sltot branch
to sake sure she does not cause things to be polluted by hear presence (for
\text{\text{aaple, she must hit the side of the hut door with her sltot four tines befwr
miters or leaves, end before crossing a river or an irrigation canal aha
\text{tat hit the water In the same manner). There are also restrictions which not
only reflect the idea that she is polluted, but that she is neither a girl nor
\text{\text{an but In an in-between state, or what Turner (1974) refers to as a
\text{\text{iainal* stage (for example, she should only whisper, not wear shoes, not
fc'aet man, etc.). Her special relationship with women and other chaseri is
acted by the fact that she can greet them, but in a specific ritualised \text{aj
her sitet branch.
\text{firing seolusion girls are not allowed to have any sexual relation and
\text{\text{leep in their tot; a specially made narrow bed which is sealed off from
A3?}
If a girl has a sexual relation during her seclusion period, people say that she will have to face similar consequences to a girl who had olitoridotomy. In the latter phase of the seclusion period, the special ornaments required for klpuuno (for example, the oven down the back of the girl, the til, headband, etc.), the traditional necklace or sanal. After two to three months, towards the end of the seclusion period, the women and children of the neighbourhood meet at the gj’erí houses to sing and practise various songs and dance, including those g’h are especial to klpuuno.

Before the coming-out ceremonies, the family of each chemeríen must provide one goat plus twenty kilos of maize for the ceremony of lapan (pans cocked grain - the staple food of the Pokot diet). Lapan is basically a feast for the women of the neighbourhood, in which the meat and maize is divided fairly amongst the women and given as a payment to all those who participate in the various stages of the Initiation rite. Because it is a women’s ceremony, women are given the less desirable parts of the goat (for example, the goat’s head, intestines, etc.) which are usually given to women in the many ceremonies conducted by men. The men do not actually participate in the songs and activities of lapan but are called to come and eat their food in a secluded hut nearby. The more significant lapan are those done nearer the time of the coming-out ceremonies in which, aside from practising the various songs and dances of klpuuno, women also sing a number of ‘rude’ or ‘obscene’ songs and about out phrases, deliberately teasing or taunting men about sex.

The first songs sung at lapan are called cherlpko, and are sung with the and chemerí standing in a line facing the other homesteads across the W*, while they wave their altot branches in the air. At the end of most of these ceremonies, but not chemerí, shout various obscenities across the hills to women. If any man should come near the women at this time, he will be chased by a group of excited women making numerous obscene gestures and remarks, tfcs phrases which are shouted across the hills are about raan’s own
sometimes teasing the men that they are not easily satisfied. Of then express that sen want or need sex with the olear recognition by en that they are highly desired because of it. The women explain their bersnt behaviour as a wty of expressing their excitement that the ohemelv oov Tory near to attaining their full sexual and mature status, and women bout very similar phrases when boys emerge from their seolnsion period during be male initiation rite. Nonetheless, it is a strong contrast to the strict loles of obedienoe emphasised throughout the rite (examples of the shouts and i00gi are given on pppJl^-1ll1).

Towards the end of all lepan the special songs and dances of klpuno are practised, and the chemeri are advised or Instructed by the wosaen on how they are expected to behave as wives and mothers. The moro detailed Instruction takes place at different times In different neigjbbourhoods, bat el`ys begins tith s review of the individual history and personality of each chemerlon by her eother,before the group of neighbourhood women begin shooting their advice. It is a particularly pactional time,when each ohemerlon Is made to kneel with her head buried in her hands while the women whip her (with their sitot branches) and rave about the various mistakes she had made and how she must correct them. is the tension mounts and more beer is drunk, women begin to contradict each other,and the 'harshness' they display often depicts their own apprehension *art the rules they themselves have been made to follow (for examples see There is also the recognition that soon after this the chemerlon leave her hose; after being brought up and working closely with her * her every day, the time of separation between mother and daughter is Clonal and difficult.

* The Coming-out Ceremonies

Just before klpuno all the chemeri are taken to the river to perform a t, private ceremony. Before reaching the river, the old mothers ohedk litoridotoq scars of the ohemelv to make sure that none of them has had relations during their seclusion period. lbs oirs-ts winoh take place ^ : if I
the river are led by an older mother, whose first born is a girl and who has lost any children.

The ohemerì are led to a particular pool of still water in the river which has been used by the women of the neighbourhood for many generations. It is agreed that the leader hits the water with her alrot branch, with each Phaserion flowing through what she does in turn (the girls follow the order of their fathers' group - the father of the first girl belonging to the eldest age group and so on)*. Women say that after each chemerion hits the water a rainbow should appear (probably caused by the spray after hitting the water). The Jinbãoa is said to be wife of the rain god who should show her approval to each chemerion. If the women see a rainbow they do a abort blessing to give thanks, and ululate to indicate their success.

If it is a slightly more shallow place in the river, each chemerion must follow the leader by placing one iron bead and some ghee in the water. The movement of the bead and ghee is said to indicate the future health and childbearing capacities of each of the initiates. For example, it is said that if the bead does not lie still on the river basin, it means the girl will probably be barren, or if the ghee becomes stringy and floats downstream, she will become a rlwoi having difficult breech births, and so on. A few special acngs are sung at this time which indicate that the ohemerì have brought their beads to their "other and "mixed" them with "the others of the past". Stories differ as to or what actually lives in the water. Most women say it is wife the rain god; but other women have told me that it is the wife of ancestral spirit (representing all ancestors rather than any particular Whichever, all women recognise it as a powerful spiritual force which kwu itself and received the beads of Initiates for many generations.

Completing these events, the chemerì are allowed to wash their bodies for the first time since the beginning of their seclusion period. Yemen's perception of their reproductive powers is oloaked in epistles in Epilation rite, but it is nonetheless evident that they conceive of it as
nothing related to the supernatural – beyond themselves and their ooctroi. 

A niæber of taboos end references concerning water during WORMI’S 

tlation; and it ia significant that most woman say thay wait for the 
gptaranoe of the vife of tha rain god at thia very aeoret stage of the rite 
hare a apeial relationship and particular oontrol oyer the rain, and 
exility ia sometimes associated with rain and the fertility of the land. The 
iliixest example of this ia that, if the position of the stars Kara and Venus 
judicata to the Pokot that there will be no rain, ” the waa-i of the neighbour-
hood moat go Into the hills and alng their seoret initiation songs to make it 
rein. If they do not, it is hollered that women will not bear ohildren 
loosessfully and the young ohildren will die.

ifteTha ohemerl hare washed, the final preparationa for klpuno begin. 
The actual songs and event a of klpuno are similar in most areas, although tha 
eider la which they are performed varies. Usually, after coming from the 
river, the Initiates go to their own huts where they collect their ornaments 
sd are blessed (in a way similar to when they returned from the olitoridotony 
ceremony). ill the new ornament a must also be blessed by members of the 
ocmunity before the initiates can put them on for the first time. The 
ornaments are placed on a large oow skin and shaken by old men and women (who 
kve not lost any ohildren) as they aing, "poro, poro, poro, four". The word 
Egro is usually only used by older men who have completed the last phase of 
their age set ceramoniea. In most oases men say ”poro (or porokok) four” as a 
*ld curse to chase away aiy ill effecta or harm which may be caused by the 
*acestora or spirits (see p. 

Most of the girls are given a new kolika to wear for the final ooming-out 
° trtmoales. The older women mark these skins using white ohalk for the 

who are pregnant, and rod earth for the girls who are not. * Because 
'U the social ideal that girls should not get pregnant before they are 
**tat ad and married, a distinction is made between the ohemerl who are and 
n*** not pregnant. However, other than marking the skins in different
loari, the ohenari are all treated the same throughout the Initiation
^oo-eeings. Pokot always place far more importance on the fact that a girl
gat not gire birth before ahe la initiated, rather than that she should not
ttocm* pregnant. The women olain that the xabar of lines they draw on an
Initiate’s ko’fr* represents the ntuber of children she will have, and any
tirole which is drawn represents a vagina, “the house of woanen”. A circle is
tfo drawn on the stone which the Initiates sit on when their vaginas are
checked for the last tine to make sure that they hare not had sexual Intercourse.
Since women sit an stones to give birth, the olrole can be seen as another sign
ftlating to the initiates’ ability to give birth to children.

After all the ornamenta have been blessed and marked the Initiates are
finally allowed to put them on. They oil their bodies end beautify themselves
before going to the public dance area, where they will meet a large crowd of
people and many of their sale relations, whom they have not seen since the
beginning of their seclusion period. It the public dance special postures and
steps are adopted to the fast rhythm of the kijuno songs.
Anumber of songs are aung which mention various events that have occurred in
the area; the names of the different places the girls have come from; the
Maes of their fathers whom they hare honoured by completing the initiation
rite successfully; and so on. The poro song is usually sung last, and
fterwards the initiates run to the neareat tree hawing white sap (simo* or
ghotwo tree) and spear it with their sendit sticks (special carved sticks
kich are used at kipuno and kept by the women until they marry). The
Vitiates then lick the sap or aeear it on their chests (symbolically drinking
the ‘siif of the tree). They then kneel down burying their faces in their
’d and each waits for a young boy to promiae her a gift of stock aa if he
her hnjhimfl. These promises are not taken seriously, but it is
**resting to note that, at sale initiation, a young girl does the same to a
Initiated man (the girls actually oall the young men their “wives’ and
l `1 them up* by proaiidsg than a gift of steak, a complete reversal of roles,
The initiates continue to wear their large skins and special ornaments until the private and secret ceremony of *sewo* takes place, four days after the completion of *kipuno*. During these four days the initiates go to the steadhs of their fathers and their fathers’ and mothers’ brothers. All of these relations are expected to bless the initiate by pouring milk on her forehead, and must promise her stock which she can collect after she has been married for a few years (usually after she has given birth to her first child).

In order to attend the very last ceremony of *sewo*, the family of each initiate must provide a small goat and some maize as a payment to the older woman who conduct the ceremony. Of all the stages of initiation, *sewo* are most secretive about *sewo*. The most important part of *sewo* can only be performed by women whose last born children have given birth. This was used as a rationale for not letting me attend the ceremony, but some of my close women friends were eventually willing to give me a detailed account of what *sewo* involved. According to these women, most of the songs are the same songs which have been sung during the seclusion period. (Only once have I been given an account of a song particular to *sewo*: in this case the various household tools are mentioned as the initiates are made to act out some of the household tasks they will be expected to perform as married women.) At *sewo*, the initiates are once again advised or judged by the women of the neighborhood. The procedure and advice given is very similar to that of *lapan*, except that the initiates who are known to be disobedient are treated more harshly than before, with the women beating their bare backs as they kneel in front of them.

I have heard a number of different versions as to what happens during the secret part of *sewo*, when the old grandmothers go to a secluded spot with the initiates. The fact that the initiates must pour metal beads and uncover from a particular spot, remains clear throughout all the accounts. It that each initiate and her leader (the same woman who led the ceremony)}
took place at the river), must bury two metal beads under atones in a
pftloilar spot. It la frosi the ssae spot that the leader than uncovers two
jits belonging to the girls who were last Initiated In the neighbourhood.
ofst two beada are given to women (possibly the Bothers whose daughters vert
vitiated the previous year) snd they wear then on their speolal ritual belts.

women say that the intltlatea are Bade to take an oath at this apofe
promising to "follow the words of wtmen and not reveal any of their aoorete".
ther the Initiates are sude to take the oath or not, there ia an important
obolio bond established between waan of one neighbourhood; bj burying new
bssds and uncovering old beada of the intltlatea over the years.

After the secret part of sewo, a few more songs are sung and the 'new'
vaen then go to their homes to destroy their tot bed which they have slept in
for the past few aonths. In many oases bridewealth negotiations have been
ooapleted during the initiate’s seolnsion period, snd the husband oernes to take
his bride heme the night sewo is finished. It la the Pokot ideal that a newly
initiated woman goes to her husband; a home wearing all the speolal ornaments of
Kmno and sewo. If she does, it signifies to the rest of the community that
the husband of the 'new' woman is the first who will have sexual intercourse
ith her, therAy splitting the scar tissue for the first time and making it
bleed.

Male Perspective: Initiation as a Mechanism of Social Control

Pokot men snd waen give a number of different reasons when they are asked
aoen'a initiation is performed. Although women usually give far more
bailed answers than men (who confess to knowing little about a •women’s
”feaony”), ’both men and women regard women'a initiation as an important part
overall ritual snd soial framework of Pokot society. Thda section
^ * s the two most oonon ezplanatia given by Pokot men and woman when
^ * Uaouss the purpose of women's initiation: 1) that initiation gives woene
I* to bear ohildren and 2) that women initiate girls because men
boys. Those statements will be analysed in regard to the place women’s initiation occupies within the dominant social order, and the broader question of whether – or to what extent – men impose their control over women’s vitiation.

Social Control of Women’s Procreative Powers

The most important consequence of women’s initiation rite is to legitimise I woman’s right to have children. The ritual of women’s initiation can be seen as the first social recognition of, and attempt to control, women’s procreative powers. Although girls can have sexual intercourse (and may become pregnant) before initiation, the Pokot do not recognise or ‘allow’ the girls to give birth until they have become socially mature women. As discussed in Chapter 17, Pokot men perceive the physical nature of woman as something dangerous: articulating the view that women are polluted because of their childbearing capacites, while at the same time recognising this capacity as the power to create and something beyond their control. Seen as part of the dominant social order, the complex initiation ritual is a way of bringing the ‘natural power’ of women into the sphere of social control.

La Fontaine reports (1972), biological changes are often marked by elaborate rites de passage, rituals which dramatise not only a physical change but also a change in social status. Because women’s initiation is performed before the time a girl reaches puberty, the same could be said about the Pokot. However, the emphasis in Pokot is placed on granting a girl mature status, rather than on the biological change she may have recently gone through. For example, unlike in Gusli (Koloski: 1967), where an elaborate female initiation ritual takes place before a girl reaches puberty, most Pokot girls are initiated after the onset of menstruation. Also, unlike in Gusli, if a Pokot girl is pregnant before initiation, it is not considered to be a heinous offence.

After initiation a girl becomes a crar or young woman. At this point she
the distinct ornament* worn by other women and beoaaea Integrated Into a 
social group. la a mwar, ahe has different social responsibilities which are 
acutely defined when the wife moves to her husband’s neighbourhood and 
the wife of a person. In Pokot, when a girl attains full 
status, she also attains full sexual status in that she is now ‘allowed’ 
give birth. Granting a girl mature social status, which ‘allows’ her to 
give birth, is nonetheless closely linked to the biological fact that she has 
not yet been able to do so. The longer the interim between puberty and initiation,
the greater the risk of pregnancy. Although it runs against the social ‘ideal’, 
the surprising number of girls are pregnant when initiated: from my records on % 
41 of the girls initiated were pregnant. With this in mind let us examine the part women’s initiation plays in bringing women’s 
procreative powers under social control. More specifically, looking at the 
question to what extent Pokot women’s initiation can be seen as a mechanism by which men ensure their control over women.

From the description of the initiation rite (pp. 33-**), it is clear that 
men do not play any direct role in women’s Initiation except at the public 
ceremonies, when the girls go through olitoridotomy, and at the coming-out 
ceremonies where they are presented to the community. However, men are 
implied throughout the ceremonies: especially in the more private secret 
ceremonies by old women, who continually stress the fact that the girls should 
honour her father and obey her husband and the rules of her affinal home. 
It is remembered that initiation is not only a pre-requisite to childbirth, 
also to marriage. In many ways initiation and ammdage cannot be seen as 
completely separate events. Many women are taken to their husband’s home 
only after finishing the last stage of initiation. From that night onwards 
occupie are considered to be legally married, and little further ritual 
oration takes place until sometime later when nosilo is performed, and a 
a marriage bead is twisted onto her wrist.

*It+<i
The night the bride is taken to her husband's home, there are many ritual details which are a direct consequence of initiation (for example, a bride would be wearing all her ritual ornaments of kipiino; me of these ornaments returned to her mother with a gift of boor from her husband a few days after marriage; the morning after she has had sex with her husband she lit ceremonial headband, oto.) However, a more important consequence of initiation is that the husband should be the first person to have sexual intercourse with the newly initiated woman, thereby being the first to splinter the olitoridotomy soar and make it bleed. The soar could be seen as Iphbolically recreating a hymen, thus asking the woman into an unspoilt realm for her husband, by symbolically obliterating any previous sexual relation to the person who had had sex before marriage. By having sexual intercourse with his wife for the 'first' time, it could be said that the husband is the first to initiate her procreative life, thereby establishing his control over it. A similar principle is discussed by La Fontaine (1972), when she writes about the importance of defloration among the Gisu. Although Gisu women do not go through initiation or olitoridotomy, La Fontaine discusses defloration as an aspect of the final stage accompanying the rituals marking their progress from girlhood to womanhood.

Let us take a closer look at the ethnographic data, to see to what extent it supports the idea that initiation creates a symbolic situation, allowing the husband to exert his control over women's sexuality and fertility. We have seen that there is continual emphasis on the rule that a girl should not have sexual intercourse during her seclusion period, and if she does she will face harsh consequences. The night a woman has sexual intercourse with her husband for the first time, is distinguished as being an important event, because, before agreeing to do so, a woman demands a large gift of stock from her husband (although other gifts are promised to women when they are brought to their husband's home, they have most control over the stock given to them). However, other than this, there is no
recognition or ritual elaboration of the actual splitting of the Xitorid©to*y soar. Nonetheless, it is significant that both Pokot men and women articulate the idea that the first act of sexual intercourse between a husband and his wife endorses the natal relationship which is confirmed through the transaction of stock. They also say that a woman should only have sexual intercourse with her future husband after bridewealth transactions have been completed: the ideal being that this occurs just after initiation and the husband is the first to split the woman's olitoridotcay soar. Whenever a pokot woman spoke to me about the first sexual act of marriage, she would either articulate the association between the 'giving of her vagina' and outstanding payment of stock "for herself and her children", or emphasise the importance of a man having paid bridewealth, thus being her legal husband. In example of the latter was revealed in a taped discussion I had with Koko-Kerlonger about olitorHotooyx. "When they out a child, beer comes - beer for a wife (i.e. beer brought during bridewealth negotiations). Her parents have agreed, and he (the husband) will come to take her to his home. He has brought beer, and when he takes her to his home she is 'without'; she has not played sex. Her soar is completely black. It will be time to go to bed. Then 'tat' comes the blood, 'tatatatat', the penis has entered inside."

Some Pokot say that a woman does not have the right to receive stock if she has had sexual relations in the interim between initiation and marriage, but I have many case examples showing that women do actually receive stock. Whether a woman 'should', or actually does, receive stock seems to vary from one area to another, and also depends on the individual circumstances of the marriage. Bridewealth negotiations are not settled for a long time after a woman has completed initiation, the likelihood that she will have had sexual intercourse before she is married is far greater). Other than this, I have not heard of harsh consequences which might occur if the husband is not the first to have intercourse with a woman after initiation.

This is in contrast to La Fontaine's material on the Gisu, where she writes
Upon deflowering his bride a man will shout out to an enslting crowd: or

does not prove to be a virgin, the men has the right to divorce her.

Nevertheless, although it is not held to be of the utmost importance, there is
evidence in the Pokot material to support the idea that a husband

be the first man to have sexual intercourse with a woman after

of deflowering. The breaking of the olitoridotomy scar could thus be interpreted

claim of a man over his wife who, from then on, should only produce

children for his patrilineage.

To carry out a valid comparison with La Fontaine's material one has to

her argument as a whole and make the distinction between defloweration of

young virgin, and symbolic defloweration of a woman after clitoridotomy and

vitiation. La Fontaine argues that men demonstrate their control over women

through defloweration: men, and culture, control the bleeding of women as
closed to the uncontrolled or natural bleeding which occurs at childbirth and

imstriction. La Fontaine explains that the three stages - menstruation,
defloweration, and childbirth - are all ritual events but defloweration is the most

ritually elaborate and regarded as being the most important.

As we have seen, splitting the scar of olitoridotomy is not ritually

borate in Pokot. Also the Pokot do not view it as being the most important

part of initiation and marriage, although the first sexual act does, in a

confirm the marital relationship, and the social ideal is that a man

a scar at this time. Thus, there is enough evidence to support

idea of symbolic defloweration; an endorsement of male control over female

uty and fertility. However, it must be remembered that, although a man

diabolically deflower his bride by making her clitoridotomy scar bleed,

itself was made by women as part of their own "women's ritual".

If clitoridotomy was done solely to ensure male control over female

and fertility, one would have thought that there would be less

ct of girls who become pregnant before initiation, and possibly a greater

Placed on initiating girls before they reach puberty (as among the Gaail),
Pokot women view their own sexuality and childbearing capacities as a source of power; a concept which they express amongst themselves and in their initiation rite (discussed in detail in section 5). Although men may use masturbation and childbirth as a rationale for female subordination, they nonetheless remain in awe of women's 'natural' powers, and accept that women hold a better understanding and control (in certain respects) over their sexuality and reproductive capacities than they do. As discussed in Chapter 17, childbirth is controlled primarily by women, from the necessary cutting at birth to enlarge the vaginal opening, to the ritual aspects of blessing and purification. If we say that men impose their control over women the first sight of marriage, then we must also say that women take back their control over women when they give birth to their first child.

From the above analysis, it is clear that there is no single or straightforward answer to the original question regarding the extent to which men impose their control over women's initiation. Women's initiation is one way in which women's procreative powers are brought under social control. Although women's initiation is strongly influenced by social oois&ruots and 'sale' expectations, the initiation rite itself is certainly not controlled by men. Because of this, social control of women's procreative powers cannot be attributed solely to men, but must include a male and female framework. In Pokot, both men and women impose their own perceptions of 'culture' on their own sexes, and each other through their individual initiation rites. This is justly summed up by Pokot men and women in a commonly expressed purpose performing women's initiation, "Wanen initiate girls because men initiate.

Aspects of male initiation in relation to female initiation
Both male and female initiation are equally elaborate in ritual detail and a similar pattern and sequence of events. Although the details of the aegis and activities may differ, boys are circumcised, go through a two to three-acnith seclusion period (staying together in one hut rather than in
Individual homes), and afterwards perform the oomling-cot ceremonies of klpuno, and finally the last and private ceremony of sexo. Like women, make sure that the secrets of their initiation rites are not revealed to uninitiated, in this osse women and children.

The main difference between the two initiation rites is timings whereas male initiation takes place each year in different neighbourhoods, sals initiation occurs approximately once every three to four years in the same area, to different neighbourhoods from east to west throughout the Pokot region. Usually a large amber of boys are initiated together In one group (gcae 20 to kO including boys from nearby neighbourhoods), and the ages of the age range from approximately twelve to twenty years. When a man is initiated he becomes part of the age-set or pun existing at that time. There are at least eight known pun and these are cyclical, with the last pun repeated again only after all members of that age-set have died. A man remains a part of the he is initiated into for his entire lifetime, although as he gets older he passes through various age-grades or ranks. A close buuU of support and mutual obligation, often cemented through stock exchanges, ia established between men of the same pun. For men, the hierarchy based on age, and the obligation of age mates is further defined by the age-set system of the Turkana and Karaaojong, which the Pokot have interwoven with their ocm (for further explanation of the age-set system see pp./<? - Oul ).

Although the entire process is delayed for boya, and they pass through other age-grades in their lifetime, the result of male initiation is similar to female initiation; after initiation a boy attains mature social and sexual actus. Unlike girls, however, it is only after a boy is circumcised that he is allowed to have sexual relations and later marry. Because of this, boys not enjoy the same sort of sexual freedom which girls do before initiation, ununcircunised boy to Impregnste a girl or woman is considered a heinous and the elders should ensure that the child is aborted. It is esting that some time after the ritual proceedings of male Initiation have
Appletad (including the secret ceremony of sewo). the newly initiated men go through another ceremony referred to as sukutlon before they are oired to have aerual intercourse (aukution la held when the termites fly and at this time that the alders are said to teach tha youths about sexual jpterours*). Ill of this indicates a more defined attempt by older aen to ^trol boys’ aaxuality, than la made by man or woman to ootrol girls’ jjgoality. However, men enjoy considerable aexual freedom in the two to eight pX period after they are initiated and before they are able to obtain tha taciissary bridewealth for marriage. Ivan after marriage, a man la not jristricted from carrying on a number of affalra with girla and young unmarried lj*ru This la in strong contrast to women, who are married soon after initiation sad are then expoted to remain aamally faithful to their husband*. Riit women are, in fact, expected to mature and take on family responsibility it a much younger age than Pokot mem.

The similarities between male and female initiation are striking, and, by ulding a brief comparison of the two rites, it becomes clear why the Pokot fcaaaelva see them as complementary. Taking a close look at what happens in the two rites, it is also difficult to define exactly who is following or Stating whom and why. Unlike olitoridotmy which takes place in public, aen are present at the operation of male circumcision, and although a youth ibuid show his bravery and remain still, there are no harsh consequences if he *ches or expresses his pain during the operatic*. After he is circumcised is known as a tiyoa and is considered to be in an unclean state similar to

of a chemerl. Like ohemerl, people say that tiyos are orua; hazy or but also emphasise the vulnerability of the country as a whole: "the o4 of tiyoa is heavy and brings disease and badness to the country*• aimilar to thoae on chemeri restrict the behaviour of tiyoa and are gradually as they paas through various ritual phases; for example, cannot eat with their hands until after the oompletion of lanow.
aen of the neighbourhood build a gpccie.1 hut for their tiyos ^called
neighbourhood always stay in *mencho* with the *tyos*, but all the elders and fathers of the initiates gather there to teach them the special *songs* and secrets of initiation's veil as to review their individual characters and prepare them in a similar way to that in which older women advise girls during *fals* initiation. In *tyos*, the boys are dressed in *oloaka* and their faces are covered with a veil of rope which they make themselves. These, as well as other special ornaments, are then smeared in red ochre. The rope veil is especially important to hide the boys from their mothers and aunts when, after having completed various ritual phases, they are allowed to travel around the country during the day.

Although women are excluded from *mencho*, they are mentioned in many of the songs sung by *tyos* and participate in different stages of male initiation, particularly towards the end and at the coming-out ceremony of *kipuno*. *Tyos* sing every morning and evening and many of their songs include phrases which refer to and praise mothers and womanhood. For example, "Praise *ohepkur; daughter of closed or restricted" is said in praise of mothers for having observed taboos such as those during pregnancy and after childbirth. Other phrases include, "praise *korka; women in general", and more specifically, "praise *vonya; mothers". Whenever the women hear the *tyos* sing (including ceremonies such as *kipuno*) they respond with ululations which confirm the praise the *tyos* sing; "sons of perseverance" and "sons of scars" both refer to the strength and perseverance which women have endured for their sons during their own initiation and during childbirth (see also p./3^).

The women of the neighbourhood participate in male initiation right from the start, when men build the frame of *mencho* and women cut the grass for the *og*. Mothers of *tyos* are particularly active participants as they bring food to their sons every morning. When a mother brings the basket of food to an older man waiting near *mencho*, she can also report on her son's individual character and any instances of misbehaviour she feels are important.
Although it is possible that men do not always react to others' remarks, it is nonetheless significant that mothers have a formalised role of participating in the teaching process and advice given to their sons at friritation, whereas men do not have this concerning their daughters. This is an overt recognition by men of the importance of women's role as the socialiser of boys as well as of girls. In this case, a direct link is made between a woman's role as socialiser with cooked food and thus with the domestic domain.

The period of giving advice to the boys culminates with the ceremony of plat; to burn. At this time, the men tell the women of the community that they will burn their sons' penises and that this ordeal will cause their death. The man who ritually burns the boys, first walks through the neighbourhood brandishing poison arrows and screaming before he finally arrives at naccho. Having thus had their attention attracted, the women gather in a group giving their varying opinions as to whether or not the men actually burn the tiyos, but they all agree that the boys do not actually die. While discussing the various possibilities, they stand near by and listen to the confusion of noise coming from mencho, with the sound of men and tiyos screaming as arrows supposedly hit the side of the hut wall. After this there is a heavy alienation, when the tiyos are supposedly dead, and they do not come live until the following evening when they sing their songs once again. It is said that if one of the tiyos dies for a long time, then the men will have to perform mol and call the wawen to find out which one of the mothers has confessed adultery while her son was at mencho. In this way, men hold the others responsible for the well-being of their sons while they are in elusion. It is another example of men imposing their ritual control over men's sexuality, and it is interesting to note that it is done at a time when the fathers are away from home at mencho, making the possibility of pultery that much greater.

Just before the public coming-out ceremony of klpuno, the various feasts of
take pl&ot; and women are given a portion of the neat in the same way that are given a portion of meat at female initiation. Women's insistence that they receive their fair share becomes clear to me in 1977, when the women of Ptnr felt that they had been cheated and, to the surprise of the men, stormed the sacred area of mencho ^singing rude songs and beating the men with branches, fba first direct contact women have with the veiled tiyos is at the singing and pacing on the morning of klpuno. However, mothers do not actually see the faces and bodies of their sons until later in the day. They must first break through a human chain, made by the men of the neighbourhood, to get to their sons fho nia huddled together crouched on the ground, holding their red cloaks tightly over themselves. When a mother has finally found her own son, she dresses him in a new cloak and makes him "beautiful" by smearing him with ghee and decorating him with her necklaces. The initiates are now known as mrar: young women, and after a few dances go to spear a tree with white sap and symbolically lick its "milk". Here they wait crouched over until a girl or woman promises them a gift of stock. Men bairn shouting at the girls and women to go and "wake up their wives", making the tiyos stand and go in the same way that a husband coaxes his wife to come to his premises she promises her stock on the first night he brings his wife home. Is airar the Initiates have four days to go to their mothers, the other wives of their fathers, and their mothers' and fathers' sisters, who must bless them and promise them stock before they complete the final ceremony of sewo.

It is clear that throughout male initiation many references are made to and that women also actively participate in the initiation rite. At times, the references to women and the role they play in male initiation, is a °star articulation by men of their respect of womanhood. For example, the iae men give to women and mothers in their initiation songs; the fact that feminine have s recognised right to participate in the advice given to their and that others and other female relations can bless and promise the initiates stock, which also recognises the rights women have over property.
References to women and aspects of their participation are far more
^Jguoua, and the meaning of such actions, as the role reversal at klpuno im
^ to many different interpretations. is a symbolic statement, the role
roloral condenses a number of different meanings and relationships, some of

gle may be ambiguous or even contradictory. I will explore some of the
possible interpretations below, but, the fact that newly initiated men become
jptB/vivtSjis nonetheless a positive acknowledgement by men of women and

terhood. Whether ambiguous or dearly articulated, men make a rare public
gettmaent of their respect towards women in their initiation rite.

When asked why newly initiated men are dressed as arar, P6kot men and women
radioaly answer by aying that it makes the boys beautiful. In the same way that
girls are made beautiful in their initiation rite. Lokoripira, however, was
lore specific: "Everyone becomes a mlar, a chemerlon she is a mrax and even a
no he is a mlar. The person who will marry the chemerlon or her father (if
there is no prospective groom) will buy the chemerlon beads and make her
beautiful. The tlyosion will be given beada and u« beautiful by his
mother and his sister. Since marriage is patrilocal it is significant that
girls' future wives, should be decorated by their future husbands, while men,
future husbands are decorated by their mothers and aisters. In each case,
ma is where the initiate will establish higher marital home. In the case
* the tivos, this can be seen as a symbolic gesture whereby women reclaim
their authority over their grown sons, particularly in matters concerning the
'estic domain. It is here that a woman's son, as an initiated man, will
* virtually marry and bring his wife, who will then be the woman's daughter-in-

> Although it is usually only mothers who decorate the tivos, it is
Want to note that sisters may do so as well. They do so as female
^rs of the natal domestic group who may, whenever necessary, call on tho
^ of their brothers.

Ken continually emphasize that women should not have oontaot with tivoo
they are at mencho, but during the seclusion period men also specifically

ISS
i'an that the tiyos hare died. In effect, women ere told that their
boja hare died, and thej are not allowed to hare oontaot with thee
they hare become nature men. The first mcment women actually hare
contact with tiyos is when the women hare managed to break through a
p19, which the men have set up, by defeating the nen in a nook battle. 1®
mothers, end nore generally woaen, symbolically reclaim their mature
from the secret male world which they are prohibited from entering. To
^tste their olaim over their sons^women then decorate them in their «m
43. then the mothers decorated their sons in the initiation rite at Xatu*
La977l they used not only their own beads but beads belonging to other woe®
JL^e neighbourhood. This reinforces the interpretation that it ia not os&f
A, lothers and sisters who reclaim authority over the tiyos, but also wanen
ijjigeneral. The fact that women decorate the tiyos in their beads,is a
piojio gesture which confirms that(as mature men^the initiates are now able
to early, and become part of the aociail world which includes both males and
tales.

It is also significant that tiyos are considered polluted in the same way
*oheneri, and that the restrictions and taboos concerning both groups are
to those for women after ohildblrth and during menstruation. Not only
the pattern of fmnale initiation strongly echo that of childbirth (the
ities of the two ordeals are discussed further in Section V*3: A), but
*Pattern of male Initiation does so as well. The biological change in
ita is given a 'cultural' significance through female initiation, and for
51 the most important consequence of becoming socially mature is that they
to give birth to children. After Initiation a socially mature si*2*
allowed for the first time to father children. It appears that the
"tttce of this is further emphsisised by the fact that the sequence of
1 in both aule and female initiation closely resembles that of childbirth*
* is Interesting that the account given by La Fontaine on G-isu male
i*ion (1972: 180), is very similar to my data on Pokot. La Fontaine
el, circumcision rituals can be seen as a symbolic oration in
£ the Inherent physical power of women" (ibid.). This could also be
^ for the Pokot, especially because newly Initiated men become mrar;
women end potential childbearers. However, La Fontaine then goes on to
£*t uncontrolled bleeding denotes women's (reproductive) power, while the
rolled bleeding by man (i.e. male circumcision) denotes their superior
jjil power. This could not be argued for the Pokot given that both male and
oiromulsion, using La Fontaine's model, would have to be defined as
Reding' which Is socially controlled,
^ther possible interpretation of the role reversal^ is to look at it using
jioa put forward by H. Strathern (1981);that gender stereotypes are
itiiaes used to symbolise or talk about other things. In Pokot mazy of the
ir stereotypes are modelled on the husband<orife relationship. The
"oD this raises is If the control asserted by senior men over initiates oan
likened to the oontrol husbands assert over their wives. Not only do tlyos
»erar after initiation, but they also become wives. It is, luWo»er« Swu
^tell girls and women to "wake up their wivea" promising them gifts of
. Nonetheless, the husband/wife relationship may be symbolised in the
of male initiation in the following manner: young men are to senior men
vnea are to husbands. On the one hand men becoming mrar is a symbolic
xent by men of their respect for women. On the other hand, the fact that
ver are also wives, reinstates the dominant male point of view that
ves are controlled by and subordinate to men. The hierarchy based on
w^^ further differentiated by age, in that senior men have a position of
over young men.

Women as Officiants

considering the extent of male oontrol over female initiation, it is
^ to examine why old women conduct and control the activities end
9 fem&19 initiation, and have a status of ritual authority over the
of the neighbourhood (see also Section 7.3: B). Of all Pokot

I bo
Old women with adult children have the greatest social advantage because of the recognised rights they have over their lead and substantial herds of livestock, as well as their status of respect and authority. In the domestic domain, which allows them to wield power over their sons and daughters-in-law and all the support of their grown sons when conflicts arise. Old women also tend to be less restless and stay in one honest and neighbourhood. Throughout female initiation, it is the old women who 'teach' the young girls the impacted code of behaviour, by emphasising the necessity of upholding male values. At the same time, they also voice a female perspective based on essentially female values (discussed in Section 7.3), which men may at times acknowledge, but never articulate. In this way, old women act as a link between male and female values in the context of female initiation.

It is interesting to examine the authority of older women in the light of the argument put forward by Fortes (that laliliitica is a critical stage in the developmental cycle of the domestic group. According to Fortes, initiation is the occasion when the domestic group hands over the child it has bred and reared to the total society or wider political-jural domain. For Pokot, female initiation is usually a prelude to marriage and marks the stage when a woman leaves her parental home and becomes incorporated into her husband's homestead and kin-group. As we have seen in Chapter II, many of the activities of women are confined to the domestic domain and, because they do not access to stock and wider exchange relationships, they have little recognised authority within the political-jural domain. Therefore, for women to themselves, female initiation marks the critical stage when a girl's natal Nestle unit hands her over to her husband's domestic unit. In each case, under the authority of old women: in her natal domestic unit she is under the authority of her own mother, and in her husband's domestic unit she is under the authority of her mother-in-law.
In this roapoot, the role played bj older women in wcnen's initiation rite on s new significance. They are in a position of authority not only as group but as Individuals. In the context of initiating girls into a "woman's forld", older women as a group sever the bonds between aothers and daughters j bile, over tiae, they units young wives with their aothers-in-law. At the ^ae time, as mothers-in-law, individual older women reinstate their position of authority over their individual daughters-in-law, because of the aocepted hierarchy of ritual authority and status based on age (see alao Sections 7.3: B ind C). Let us now look at how the initiation rite, as a whole, and older women, both as a group and as individuals, 'teach' initiates and young wasen a female perspective which nay differ considerably from the male social ideal.

f.J. Female Perspectives Articulating and Reinforcing the Female Point of View

The female perspective expressed in wcnen's initiation includes the accepted social ideal, as well as a contrary point of view based on female values. In赞同ress a positive pride in their individual sexuality, as in themselves as a group via-A-vis men. For women, the pride they have in their sexuality is seen as a source of power. The way in which women perceive to articulate their individual power, and their collective power, which in toy ways is a direct consequence of the bond established between them because of their initiation rite, will be examined in this section. I will take a close look at what women are saying about themselves end their world, and how this relates to their roles in Pokot society.

Clitoridotomy and Childbirth

Throughout women's initiation there are a number of references made to childhood: the taboos they observe being the same as those observed after a childhood- when the initiates go to the river and their ability to give birth Predicted; the marking of their klpuno skirts which indicates the number of kildren they will have; and the fact that the leader must be a woman who has lost any children. This can be seen as part of the overall social
Ition and respect given to motherhood and successful childbirth. The woman should give birth to many children (both sons and daughters), and wasen, and mnhphaaid in many different ceremonies; women are bleased to give birth to many children in the marriage of nosio, at parpara (performed before a woman gives birth to her child), end on other occasions. However, the many references made to delivery in women's initiation, and particularly to the birth of girls, has a greater and more pertinent significance to women than the wider social Ideal of a successful birth.

fosen often refer to childbirth when describing the details of idotogy. This is especially true when they speak of the pain of childbirth that of clitaridotomy, most women agreeing that the pain of childbirth is greater than that of clitaridotomy. Aside from the fact that they have painful experiences which Pokot women are made to endure, there are similarities between the two ordeals. One of the most striking similarities is that the posture and attitude which the girls 'mists hold during clitaridotomy, is almost the same as the posture Pokot women adopt when giving birth. At childbirth an older woman sometimes supports a woman's back as she on a stone giving birth, but a woman is still expected to withstand the bravely and be as calm as possible. As we have seen, at childbirth a goes through stages similar to those of a rite de passage although the etives involved are far less elaborate than at initiation and take a entirely short period of time. Like initiation, childbirth is considered a woman's affair from which men are strictly excluded. Furthermore, clitaridotomy at initiation, for at least the first two births a woman is r in to enlarge the vaginal opening. Whether a woman has been cut or not, proximately two to three weeks after childbirth she is considered to be end restricted in similar ways to an initiate during seclusion until P  and "stops bleeding". For example, for the first few days after birth a woman should not touch food with her hands, must wear her kolika,
uld not see sen. Aa it does in initiation, tha ritual bleasing of

w lift a acaie of tha raatriotiona after childbirth, but a wcaman should still

ink water or handle food until her vaginal discharge and bleeding hare

Given the many aimilaritiea between the two ordeals, tha question arises

^thether olitoridotomy can be aeen as a test or preparation for the strength

^jjed during childbirth. By •preparing* a girl for ohildbirth I an not

^ng that the operation of olitarldotooy makes the physical act of ohildbirth
easier. In fact, most Pokot women will privately aay that olitoridotcoy

ohildbirth more difficult. For example, when Pokot women apeak about

wjurtina women (who do not go through any form of oircumoision), they envisage

the Turkana give birth easily without azy trouble. However, from my own

iia it does not appear that olitoridotoey actually makes childbirth more

(Iffloult, especially since the two cuta made by the midwife during the first
od second birth; heal within a week and prevent the complications which may be
used by the mother tearing at birth. It is Interesting to note that, in

u$m hospitals today^it is common medical practice to perform episiotomy at

birth; although the operation is different among the Pokot, both are said to

prosit tearing.

Although when discussing initiation,women do not give direct expression to

idea that initiation prepares girls for the ordeal of ohildbirth, the idea

"blicit in the expressed purpose of making a 'girl' into a 'woman'; given

^t ohildbearing Is the most important role of Pokot women. It would seem

^ one of the functions of initiation^ is to prepare the girls for what Is

of them as mature woman,by giving them a glimpse or Introduction to

^ la involved. Initiation influences a girl's attitude and prepares her

^fcaally

not only for the physical pain of childbirth, but also the periods

*seclusion Just after ohildbirth and menstruation,and the code of

expected of her as a ssaturo woman. The many associations and

^oes between the ritual pattern of cliterldotooy and childbirth reaffirm
Idea. Wen en expect a change of attitude in girls after initiation and
"ritual itself is an important way in which tho ohsngo from girlhood to
"jhood is brought about.

inother question which arises is why women make specifio references to tho
\^th of daughters throughout their initiation rite: the breast milk of a
\"an suckling a girl, and not one suckling a boy, is squirted on to the wound
\"gt after olitoridototqr; and the woman who leads events at the river is one
\^e first bom is a girl. Having daughters in particular is considered to be
\"portant,not only by women but by men as well. is one woman said to mo, "if
\^, has many dau^iters he will beoame rich (because of the bridoroalth ho
\"eives for them)". However, it is usually women who stress tho importance
\f of having daughters rather than men. Mothers and daughters work together
\closely on a daily basis, and a woman’s work load is greatly lessened if she has
daughters who can help her do the many subsistence tasks, particularly when
\h is in a polluted state: such as after childbirth and during menstruation.
ZZZ2 2relationships are often formed between mothers and daughters, and/oeeau»
others often distrust their dau^iters-in-law: hey usually manage to keep at
\ast one married daughter living close by (see also Section III ).
"Lasty, the emphasis on giving birth to daughters can be seen as something particular
tovemen’s initiation rite: a simple recognition by women of the fact that,
\*without dauajitera they could not perform their initiation rita.

is we have seen, initiation in a sense prepares girls for mature womanhood,
\" in particular the act of childbirth. Unlike men, women regard childbirth
\"Kmething positive which strengthens their identity with each other. This
Plitude, and women's preference of giving birth to girls, is symbolically
\v pressed and reinforced through female initiation. It is significant that
\*fery i* essentially the responsibility of older women, who also play an
\nt role in women’s initiation. Let us now examine their role in closer

16S
fokot women ssy that old wasen make girls into vasen through initiation by womanhood. One of the many facets of this 'teaching', is the initiates are shown, for the first time, the various secret songs and pities particular to women's initiation, thus making them part of a select with its own particular ritual knowledge. Women find value in being of this select group, in which shared secrets strengthen their Identity and other. Women begin excluding men and younger children from the parts of initiation, on the first night before olitoridotonjy, when they data themselves as a group and sing the songs of dawn. Women's emphasis continues throughout the seclusion period; for example, singing the LWil initiation songs the first four nights after clitoridotooy, at the rites and instructions of japan, and so on. The secrecy is, however, evident in the later stages of the rite, when the initiates are taken to river and at sewo.

fcean's solidarity, based on sex, is divided along the lines of ages. Only know the — Thng and how to conduct the secret aspects of women's tion. Old women guard their secrets and only pass their knowledge on to old women. These secrets focus mainly on aspects of childbirth and over which old women assume a particular control. This group of who have, or are said to have, special ritual knowledge, have a tf respected authority in the community as a whole, but expaoially among Sn.

example of how old women keep the most important secrets amongst is the fact that only grandmothers, who have at least one grand-
has been initiated an go with the girls at sseps to bury and al beads. Although the initiates themselves take part in this very foment, the meaning of what they are told is not revealed to them, iata out (1956: 127-8) that the initiates of Chisungu are not aware ificance or meaning of their initiation rite until later, when, as
Older women perform the ceremony for younger girls. This is true for the Pokot as well, and, as a young initiate, a girl has little or no ritual knowledge, but if she passes the ordeal of clitidotomy successfully, she is given the chance to learn gradually the details and secrets of the rite. With this accumulated knowledge, she is later able to assert her power over future generations of girls.

A hierarchy based on age is respected by women in their initiation rites, and it is evident throughout the rite that older women are asserting their power or control over younger girls and women. Women do not form a separate age-set system through their initiation rite, but each group of girls initiated adopts the name of the current male circumcision age-set. A strong identification is formed among women initiated within the same three to four year period (the time period in which a group of boys from one neighbourhood is initiated). Like men of the same age-set these women call each other *puaendentenyu*: friend or age-mate, and although there are no ritual or social rules governing their relationship, they go through an elaborate greeting whenever they meet and should help each other in times of need. In this way, the close relationship established between Initiates of one neighbourhood (usually girl-friends who have grown up together since childhood), is broadened into an identity with other women (particularly marar) throughout the Pokot area. Initiation therefore not only strengthens women's identity with each other, but especially the identity and bond between women of the same age group. The solidarity of age-mates increases as the women get older, and attain the right to assert their ritual authority over girls.

C. Unification of the Women of One Neighbourhood and Region

It is significant that a woman accumulates ritual knowledge by participating in women's initiation in her husband's neighbourhood, rather than her natal neighbourhood. Although the overall ritual pattern of the "Vitiation rite is the same throughout the Pokot area, a number of ritual details, songs and events differ from one community to the next. A newly
ried woman is introduced to the details of the initiation rite of her tuaband'a neighbourhood for the first time when one of the girls at the neighbourhood is initiated, and over the years she gradually plays a significant role in the oerenemy. Initiation thus plays an important part in integrating new wives into the group of nelabourhood women.

It can happen that a woman marries without having completed sewo. This, however, occurs rarely and only under particular circumstances, such as when a woman elopes just after kipuno, or if a woman is from a pastoral area where sewo is not performed. Among the agricultural Pokot, a woman must go through sewo before her daughters are initiated. To do this, a woman must pay the women of her husband's neighbourhood one goat and two to three pots of beer. After being shown some of the secrets of sewo, she can then participate more fully in the initiation rites of the neighbourhood she has married into.

The fact that through the initiation rite women help to integrate new wives into their husband's neighbourhood can be seen in two ways. One is that women are accepting their position in the patriarchal system and giving their support to it; the other is that women are making their own statement of solidarity outside and separate from the patriarchal order. Because the bond between women of one neighbourhood is strengthened due to their increased participation in the initiation rite over the years, women are inadvertently giving support to the social ideal that a woman should stay with her husband and produce his children.

However, as we have seen in Chapter III, this social ideal is not always what happens in reality. For various reasons Pokot marriage can be extra señal stable and it often occurs that a woman runs away from her first or even her second husband. As such, the neighbourhood in which a woman grows old is not necessarily that of her original husband. Various case examples I have collected show that older women do not limit a woman's participation in the initiation rite because she had a complex marriage history. is 1\textsuperscript{Z} as
jbt baa completed sewo, end has stayed in the neighbourhood for an extended
^fiod of time, she will become fully integrated into the group of neighbourhood
^ga and have the ssmie privileges as any other old wanam. In this way, the
jflterle women set for a woman to gain a position of status and ritual
guthority amongst themselves,Is not In agreement with the accepted social
ideal.

One case example of this is Kobarabara, an older woman of the Katuw
\omsnarity who was highly respected for her ritual knowledge. Kobarabara
originally married Lolem when he was living in Muino. Then Lolem later became
^ployed in the town of Kapenguria, sane 60 miles away, Kobarabara followed him
there. But soon after she arrived she was rejected by Lolem because of
tooher woman. Kobarabara stayed in Kapenguria nonetheless, where she
eventually met another man and gave birth to his child. Some years later^ Lolem
returned with Kobarabara and her ohild to Muino, where she and Lolem had
tooher two children. In Muino, Lolem married a second wife, with whom
Kobarabara quarrelled. Because of this Xcb&rsbar2 left with all three of her
children and went back to her parental home near Katuw. When her sons had
grown up she moved to Katuw, because she had land she could cultivate there
which belonged to Lolem and her parents. She has now renained in Katuw for
approximately twelve years, where she plays a significant role in the women's
initiation ritual.

Eie unity of the women of one nei^bourhood is strengthened through the
ritual bend established between thnn in the more secret parts of the
initiation ritual. A ritual link is cemented between the past, present, and
nture girls and wasen of one neighbourhood^y putting their metal beads in
sae spot in the river over the years, and again by burying and uncovering
at sewo. As explained In Chapter II, the close bend between women of one
nourhood has a number of socio-economic consequences^and they often act
^actively in doing some of their daily tasks, forming work groups to farm
fields, and so on.
One Important principle in patriarchal societies which works towards maintaining sale control^ is that of separating women from one another through the rules of patrilocality. In Pokot, women go directly against this principle by uniting women from various clans into one group through their Initiation rite. When we speak of the integration of new wives into their husbands’ neighbourhood, it is important to remember that older women are integrating new wives into a group of neighbourhood women, a group with its own ritual knowledge, separate and different from *mm*. Nonetheless, the two themes of male and female influence and controllers evident in the above example. On the one hand, older women, in this context mothers-in-law, reinstate their power and authority over daughters-in-law and young wives and play out their accepted role in the patriarchal society. On the other hand, the mothers-in-law are uniting with the young wives of the neighbourhood to teach the rules and secrets of womanhood to initiates, or girls.

So far I have examined how women are united through their initiation rite on the basis of sex, age, and area. The bond established between women of one neighbourhood^is the most important in forming the basis for collective action. By integrating new wives into their husbands’ neighbourhood, women incidentally supporting the patriarchal system, but they are also uniting as a separate group outside the patriarchal order. Pokot is a patrilineal, patrilocal society in which male networks and alliances exist based on kinship residence. Even the rules of *ezogamy*, women do not have access to the same type of networks and assist therefore create their own. The most significant way of one neighbourhood establish their own networks of support and mutual ligation, is through their initiation rite.

One of the ways women make use of the female networks they establish through their Initiation rite, is through *tumba naaia* which is a collective lament about their sexuality. Women’s perception of their sexuality is included in *umby* songs and speeches in their Initiation rite, and this is explored in the next section.
Women Expressing their Views about their own Sexuality

In the various 'obscene' shouts and acings of lipan, women express the attitude they have about sex. What women say shout their sexuality is another facet of the 'teaching' or learning process which takes place at initiation, though initiates are not actually instructed on how to use, or misuse, their sexuality, the fact that women take great pleasure in announcing that they enjoy sex, and taunting men about their sexual abilities, must influence the attitude of the initiates in some way. It could be said that women are given licence to act in a normally prohibited way because of the ritual situation or context (Gluckman: 1954). But this does not explain the meaning of the songs and gestures, or why women do them.

One of the most repeated phrases shouted across the hills at lipan is simply "Give me a penis" or some variation of this, such as "Give me the penis of a motorcar". These are both examples of women shouting that they want and enjoy sex and prefer to have it as often as possible. Pokot women very much enjoy shouting their remarks across the hills at the sen. They themselves find their remarks hilarious, and usually break down in laughter when they actually shout them. Women never gave a straightforward answer and often laughed when I asked them about the meaning of their 'obscene' shouts and songs. Their answers were usually only suggestions that the sense was obvious and inherent to the phrases themselves.

It is significant that women only shout this type of remark as the initiates near the time of kipuno (usually on the evening or morning before iiguno). For women, they are statements of pride that the girls have completed the initiation ordeal successfully and are now 'new' women. Is women, the Sirla are now allowed to enjoy sexual intercourse completely, without being afraid to conceive or restricted by such methods as rotow; psychological birth control. Having been one mmar they should now try to conceive children, the time Pokot women define as being sexually the most pleasurable.

The following is another example of what la shouted across the hills at
lagan Just before kipuno?

The Tagins has gone to P'tokov fa neighbourhood, the next hill over.
The vagina has gone to SigCor [the nearest town, approximately ten
miles away]
The vagina has gone to the house of the eagle
Cane quickly with your shields end spears.

fbia is a typical example of women taunting or teasing men about sexual desire,
fhioh is a subject usually considered taboo or 'muted' in everyday situations. In its most literal sense, the verse indicates that men must chase men all over the country before women give them what they want, or consent to having sexual intercourse. Possibly, the verse also implies that men will have to fight or struggle with women before they agree to have sexual intercourse. However, the "shields and spears" could also be symbols for the phallus.
Spears, bows, arrows and other weapons have been identified as phallic symbols and representing man's virility, as for example among the Nuer (Evans-Pritchard; 1977: 233). The above example not only implies that men desire women because of their sex, but also that women enjoy sexual intercourse as well. Both men and women recognize that women enjoy sexual intercourse, for example, a song which is sung at riwold describes how men and women were once on two hills, separated by a deep canyon and it was the women who jumped into the canyon killing themselves because of their sexual "restlessness". The above example shouted at laran has similar implications, with women enticing the men to come and chase them because of their own sexual desire.

The next example is part of a ululation women call out during male initiation (usually at kipuno)

He poured my sons on the skin of the bed ["my sons" representing sperm];
If I could not hold them, there would not be any children.

is a clear articulation by women of the fact that men need them in order to conceive children. It is not only a statement of pride in their childbearing capacities, but also an explicit recognition that men need and desire them because of this. Pokot perceive conception as involving both men and women.

all societies credit wasen with reproductive powers. For example, Richards (1956: 1V9 f.n.) notes that Ngoni men identify semen as the most

\[ Wn'x \]
The portent factor in reproduction. The above atatement by Pokot women of their pride in their sexuality and fertility also reinforces their identity and solidarity with each other as childbearers.

Women make many other overt references to their sexuality and fertility in their initiation rite. It must also be considered that these references represent a release of sexual tension and frustration (as suggested by Jdgerton and Conant: 196k). Perhaps some women suffer sexual frustration because of the many ritual restrictions on their sexuality as married women. However, it must be remembered that women may, and in fact do, transgress these prohibitions in various ways (discussed in detail in Chapter 17). It is possible that the sexual songs and remarks at initiation give expression to some of the sexual antagonism which exists between men and women; women expressing their resentment of the male favoured social laws and marriage regulations which attest to restrict their sexuality by preventing them from freely having extramarital relations. As such, their expression of antagonism is contained, because it is within a socially recognised ritual context, and cannot, therefore, be seen as an open act of rebellion.

It would seem, however, that the more aignifieant statement women are asking is a positive one about their own sexuality. Although women are aware (and might resent the idea) that men try to control their sexuality, through a number of social laws, this does not negate the fact that they also know it is ultimately up to themselves, as women, whether they let them do so or not. Given the many restrictions imposed on women, they are surprisingly free in how they choose to use their sexuality, and it is not unusual for a married woman to have adulterous relationships. As we have seen from the adultery cases considered in Chapter 17, women are aware that they can use their sexuality to disrupt the patriarchal order and cause conflict between men. The awareness and pride women express about their own sexuality and fertility during women's Vitiation, seosas to underwrite this implicit recognition.

The following example of a cheripko song summarizes women's understanding
of the ambiguities and oanfliots involved in their oootrol over their sexuality:

Greetings [sexual intercourse] we are persuading our vagina to be olosed.
If it [the vagina] could be put on the faoe, we could put it in a container.
That thing [the vagina in a container] would be good to exchange for cows
That [wild] thing is in a place which is difficult to get to
It should not be played with
It will wait for father to exchange for cows and property.

As its simplest sense, this song conveys that a cheaercip should not have sexual intercourse with anyone other than her future husband, whom her father has approved of and/or has paid the agreed-upon amount of bridewealth. At the same time, it also expresses a recognition that men want and need women's "vaginas" for sex and enjoyment, and so that they can produce children. Women know that their sexuality (and ability to bear children), is part of what makes them a valuable resource within the social aystcn. For women, their value is confirmed by the fact that men have to pay bridewealth for them. The song also implies that it is essentially up to the women whether they folioos the social rules, and abstain from sexual intercourse with anyone other than their husbands; "we are persuading our vagina to be olosed". They reaffirm this idea with the imagery that their sexuality is not like an object; "a vagina in a container", which can be picked up and easily controlled. Instead it is Part of themselves as women; "in a place which ia difficult to get to", and should not be played with". In summary, the song expresses women's recognition of the dominant social order, their understanding that their sexuality is something highly desired and necessary to men and the wider social system, and that it is ultimately up to themselves as women to use their sexuality as they see fit.

** Older Women's advice to Girls: Articulating a Woman's Point of View

The instruction given after lapan, is the most Obvious time older warned, teach girls the expected code of behaviour. The privilege of telling the what is expected of them, is very much enjoyed by older
foaen. At first glance what the older women say seems harsh and absolute. They repeatedly emphasize male social values stressing that the girls must listen to and obey their husbands and fathers. However, women's emotions are at a peak because of the beer they have drunk, and the intensity of the occasion mounts as the instruction period wears on. Women instruct the girls for at least three hours, and after approximately one hour, they get carried away, show their personal emotions, and openly contradict each other. In so doing, they often reveal the exact opposite of the social laws which they are meant to be teaching the initiates.

The time of instruction becomes a kind of forum in which women vent their feelings and ideas amongst themselves. There is no question that the simplest aessage or dominant theme throughout the instruction is to tell the girls what ideally they should do as married women. However, the everyday reality of a woman's life, and the choices and actions she takes as an individual, are frequently far from the social ideal. During the instruction period women often express the actual complexity of their marital situation, times revealing the sources of power and strategies they have as a group and as individuals in difficult marital situations. There is no attempt made to hide the expression of this complexity, although sometimes it is simply implied or hinted at while at other times it is dearly articulated. The range and diversity in what women say and how they say it, leaves a great deal of room for interpretation, not only for the anthropologist, but more importantly for the Lemanal themselves. This is interesting in view of the argument made by Richards (1956: 125-9) and La Fontaine (1972: 169), who point out that this type of 'instruction' does not really impart any new information to the initiates, but is done to emphasize what they already know, and make it legitimate. This could also be said about the Pokot instruction. However, for Pokot the statement should be qualified; the Instruction given to girls legitimates a Neman's point of view which is far more complex than a simple expression of the social ideal.
The way in which the instructions are conducted is revealing in itself. On the one hand, the girls are made to kneel over in a completely servile or subordinate position so that they listen to what the old mother are saying. On the other hand, they are expected to answer the questions which were put to them. Usually they are asked questions towards the end of their individual instruction session and are expected to simply agree with what the women have said. However, if they strongly object to something which the women have said, they are expected to explain why. Whatever the case, the chaaaeri are actually provoked into giving some sort of response, and stand up to the very group of women who are punishing them for their mistakes and making them feel powerless.

This is reinforced by the fact that the girls are expected to remain motionless while kneeling over so the women can beat them with their sticks if they feel it is necessary to do so. However, the beating itself is not straightforward and often results in a test of wills between the women themselves and the individual chaader. For example, when one chaader was keeping particularly quiet, it was suggested that she be beaten and a woman called out to her: "You speak quickly my daughter, so you will not be beaten". Another time when a girl showed her weakness, a woman asked, "She is crying, what can I do to her?". Another older woman quickly answered by saying: "Beat her. She till not defeat us." In this way the women are actually building up a girl's strength and ability to respond and stand up for herself. A girl will probably need both of these qualities later, to be able to cope with the inevitable conflicts in a young marriage.

One of the messages, therefore, that women seem to 'teach' the girls is to 'void conflicts by simply agreeing with their antagonists. This message is qualified by the way it is conveyed. The qualification is that if the girls do not avoid conflicts, they will probably be beaten, and a conflict evolving the physical strength of their husbands should be avoided if possible. However, it is interesting that if a chaader has a valid complaint (against women, and by implication against her future husband), she is encouraged to...
tolas this and clearly artioulata her reasons. For example, after one of the
^haaorlon insulted the women and was beaten, the women demanded that aha "admit
her mistakes". Instead, she complained that her mother had often called her
(filly or atupid)" and had even once encouraged her brother to "aperar her",
afterwards an argument ensued amongst the women, which revealed that the mother
of the ohemerion was often drunk and irresponsible. The final conclusive
"mark was made by an old grandmother who said: "You take the good words with
you. You are now leaving your mother to remain behind with her words, and
you go with your own words•

Another apparent contradiction is the emphasis women put on individual
action and behaviour, while at the same time stressing the importance of the
solidarity of women as a group. The individual instruction of each chemerion
begins with a review of her particular mistakes and behaviour by her own mother.
The instruction which then follows by the group of women neighbours^ geared
towards the individual personality and past history of each girl. Women thus
recognise the individuality of each initiate^and the fact that (like themselves)
each girl will act differently as a married woman. However, it must be
remembered that it is the group of women from one neighbourhood who instruct
the individual chemeri. Although the women may at times contradict each other,
they act as one unified group in stating their position of authority and status
over the group of young girls. It is nonetheless interesting, that women may
specifically advise girls to act as individuals, and convey the message that
^ch girl should first assess the situation for herself before she acts. It
U only after a careful assessment of the situation •that she has the right to
**Pect the support of others, such as the women in her husband's neighbourhood
or her natal family. This is implied in the above example concerning the
^taS&rion and her drunken mother, but it is also summed up by the warning women
^peatedly give to chemeri: "When you reach acmeone's home [when you are
**ried] there will be many lies. Do not listen to lies."

I have selected the following eight remarks and dialogues because they
nobody sane of the most repeated instructions given by older women. By viewing these in detail they should serve as a summary of the main points I have raised so far.

1. Mother of a _chenerion_ (to the other women):

   "This is a bad _chenerion_, my daughter is really bad. She will divide someone's home because of her hot temper. I have seen that since she was a small girl she does not obey me. When she marries won't she take those words with her? Now she will be away from _my_ arms, what will she do with her badness now? Her husband will just beat her, right away, quickly .... Sure, you see that she is crying and her tears are falling."

   (Turning to her daughter) "... What about if your husband annoys you, without you making a mistake? What will you say _my_ daughter? Will you keep quiet or will you go against your husband?"

   The _chenerion_: "If I quarrel with my husband I will keep quiet.*

   Mother of _chenerion_:

   "Really? Look she is talking with rudeness in her throat, she is really no joke. She said she will quarrel with her husband."

   All the women present laughed.

   This example reflects most of what I have already discussed above. It begins with a sharp review by a mother of her daughter's individual personality. The mother is then very explicit about what aspects of the girl's character will cause conflict in her marriage and may hinder its success. This is not only important as an example of how women recognize the individuality of each girl, but also because the idea is expressed that a girl actually can "divide someone's home". Although the mother is telling her daughter to curtail her "hot temper", she is also implying that it is a tool her daughter might use to disrupt her marriage, end that it is ultimately up to her daughter whether she chooses to behave well or not.

   The example also reveals how women, particularly mothers, openly display their emotions. Here, the mother publicly laments the loss of her daughter saying, "now she will be away from _my_ arms ...". She then goes on to Station whether her son-in-law will be able to cope with her daughter in the way that she has. Later on, the _chenerion_ was actually beaten by the but as a symbolic gesture for it was hardly necessary since the mother
bad openly warned her daughter that if she misbehaved she would be beaten by her husband. As such, it is interesting that the Bother went on deliberately to provoke her daughter by asking her what she would do if her husband annoyed her, even if she had made no mistake. Again, it is important in the context of the instructions because an older woman has articulated a situation which should not occur, but does, and is a common cause of antagonism in Pokot marriages. The ohamerion answered the provocation in the way she was supposed to: by saying that she would keep quiet and not quarrel with her husband. But the mother simply did not believe her, and dismissed her reply by saying that her daughter was trying to deceive the women (probably in the same way she would later deceive her husband), and that her daughter actually meant the exact opposite of what she had said. Seeing the double twist made by the mother, the other women simply laughed.

2. The mother of the ohamerion:

"Someone has brought beer [for bridewealth negotiations] and you should go with him. Is there anyone else you might go with? .... Obey your father and Lckor [the girl's uncle who has helped in the bridewealth negotiations]. Yes, I have said go, then you must obey and go."

This is interesting because it embodies the two themes of male and female influence and control. In regard to bridewealth negotiations in particular, I have already pointed out in Chapter III that a mother has a great deal of influence in either persuading her daughter to marry and stay with a certain man, or in secretly helping her to get out of a proposed marriage. It is clear that women have substantial influence and power in bridewealth negotiations even though men would never admit this, and it is significant that women make a point of expressing this amongst themselves. Influencing their children and whom they will marry is definitely a power women have and recognize as theirs. In another more explicit example a mother told the group of women advising her daughter, "I refused to let that man marry my
Vitiates expresses and reinforces male values. It the same time^the example shows how women make a deliberate distinction between what they, *s women, expect the initiates to do, and what is expected of them by men. Sometimes these are one and the same, and older women are acting as spokesmen for male values. However, this is not always the case, and sometimes the instructions given depict female values (such as their control in bridewealth negotiations) which may be in opposition to, or unrecognised by, men.

3. do not cry, you speak out. You refuse because you do not want the man to marry you, is that not what you said? If you marry someone follow the rules of that home. If you have been told to do something do it, do not refuse. If you have been told to lock after the farm, obey. And if you want permission to visit your father you can ask, but if he refuses then stay home. Obey the person whom you marry.*

This is a clear example of an older woman telling an initiate to stay with and obey her husband. However, many of the things she emphasizes which the initiate 'should' do, are primary causes of conflict and tension in Pokot marriages: that women run away with their lovers and do not necessarily stay with the man they are supposed to marry (it is interesting that in this particular case, the older woman points out to the initiate that all the women know that she dislikes the man she is supposed to marry, an example of how women's gossip can play an important part in the affairs of the community); that women refuse to obey their husbands and can make their domestic situation intolerable; that they often run back to their parental home playing off their parents' loyalty against their husband's, adding to the tension which may already exist between the two. Nonetheless, it is significant that women articulate in such detail the recognized code of behaviour and social ideal. Older women in particular, have come to accept these values as ideal, realizing, through their own experience that it can be to advantage of themselves and their children if they stay married and work their husbands rather than against them.

"What will you tell the old woman of someone, so that you replace that home? [Asking how the chemerion will treat her mother-in-law given that if she stays with her husband she will eventually take
When a woman marries, she will have to work closely with her mother-in-law, who remains in a position of authority in her household until she dies, probably the main reason why women find it necessary to tell the initiates to care for and respect their future mothers-in-law, is because the relationship between mother and daughter-in-law is often fraught with conflict (see Chapter HI: 1. G (1)). However, the broader implication of women advising initiates to respect their mothers-in-law, is that it reinstates their authority over younger girls, and once again points out that the girls must not only obey and respect their husbands, but also their mothers-in-law and the older women of the neighbourhood.

5. "When you marry someone and you quarrel with your husband, you just keep quiet and count the number of mistakes, and if he has besten you without reason bring that story home. Then tell out that you have been told this and this, and it must be true."

In this example, a woman is pointing out to an initiate that it is within her recognized rights to run back to her parental home if her husband treats her unjustly. The old woman here stresses that a married woman should not run back to her parental home unless she oases back with a "true" story of how her husband has badly mistreated her several tinea. In reality, however, when a daughter returns to her parental home, he story she tells is weighed against that of her husband, and the actions her parents take are more likely to be influenced by the relationship they have with their son-in-law, than by the validity and content of their daughter's story. Women often run back to their Parental homes simply because they do not like their husbands, rather than because they have been mistreated.

This is another example in which a woman explicitly states that husbands often mistreat their wives, and that wives have the right, and power, to take action against them. This same idea is reinforced by the fact that a woman tell to initiates (usually at sewo) to run back to their parental homes on the fourth day of their siarriage, both in order to report on the conduct of their...
husband and his family and to males sura whether "a man is really searching for a wife or will just try without" (that is, that the man is sincere in his Intention of staying married to that particular woman). In a broader sense, these statements imply that women recognise that if men abuse the social rules (for example, if they mistreat their wives and/or do not fulfil their obligations to their affines), this gives women a greater chance to manoeuvre within the system and use the various recognised and unrecognized alternatives open to them to their advantage.

6. You will get a husband who is big. When they slaughter a goat, they will divide the meat evenly. When they bring maize or millet [from the highlands] they will pour it out and divide it evenly. And then he will tell you to go [to the highlands] and get more maize, and you will answer, why should I go and get more maize when I can eat it in another home."

Eeply by another woman: "Do not follow that advice. You have talked too much. What is the matter with you, are you drunk?"

This example shows how women openly contradict each other during the instruction period. Drunkenness and the excitement of the occasion are both important aspects of the ritual procedures, although women always sometimes use them as excuses for voicing their contradictory opinions. The contradictions are a significant part of the instructions, especially when the instructions are seen as a forum in which women express their own ideas, which include both what should happen in a marriage as well as what actually happens. The initiates are thus made aware of the perception women have of their own world and the choices and alternatives they have within it. In the above dialogue it is implied that a woman should obey her husband, and go to the highlands to get grain when she is asked to (a request which is usually made when there is shortage of food). At the same time, the first mother is provoking the I initiate by stating a likely answer women give if they do not wish to make the long trek up to the highlands to get grain. A woman might simply reply by asking why she should go and get maize, if she can feed herself and her children with grain she obtains from "another home", either from her own

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relations/even from another man. In this way, the woman not only articulates that a wife can, and does, disobey her husband, but also that women can produce and obtain a subsistence crop for themselves and their children, without the assistance of their husbands, even in difficult circumstances.

Another aspect of this example is that it shows how women underwrite accepted social values in the advice they give to initiates. The statement made by the first woman implies that it is to the initiate's advantage to marry a "big man" (one who is wealthy and has prestige in the community), so that she will be well provided for. However, it is important to note that, in reality, it is probably more advantageous for the initiate's parents if she marries a wealthy man than for the initiate herself. A woman who is married to a wealthy and respected man is not given any special recognition or status amongst the women themselves, and it depends on her individual character, to what extent she is able to use her husband's wealth to the advantage of herself and her children, especially if he marries a second wife.

7. "Do not pass the words of wore where you are kneeling. This stone, it is the traditional place of old mothers since long ago.... Kaplelaq generation did oath at this stone long ago. It is the house of women and it is for women of every generation. Even our mothers, they knelt at this stone, and they were beaten by other women."

8. "I say my daughter, you have no mouth when you are a chemerion, but now you should speak as I am, with a loud voice like mine, just as women do."

Both of these are clear examples which portray aspects of women's solidarity and power. The seventh example stresses the importance of secrecy and respect for old age. It also emphasizes that the initiates have now become part of the collective group of women who have successfully completed initiation, and are also part of a particular age group with whose members they have a special identity. Participating in the initiation rite itself helps to unify women of one neighbourhood. This strengthens their solidarity as a collective group, which enables them to act as one unit in such ceremonies as tumba nama.
The eighth example is also concerned with women's collective power, but is geared more directly towards the initiate as an individual. Is a girl, and during her seclusion period, a female has few social rights and little or no manipulative power. Upon obtaining full status as a woman, she gains certain rights and a position of influence, both in the community as a whole and within the group of neighbourhood women in particular. However, as the mother points out in this example, women realize that it is essentially up to each individual initiate, to decide to what extent she wishes to use her influence and rightful "loud voice". As such, the mother has explicitly said that, as a woman, she initiate not only has the right to voice her own opinion, but that she should do so with conviction, just as other Pokot women do. Implicit in this is that a woman's opinion may differ from her husband's, but she should nevertheless voice it in as clear and strong a manner as possible. Both these examples also express women's recognition that, in time, these girls will grow older and be in a position of authority over the next generation of
The Pokot differ from societies such as Gusii, where an elaborate initiation ritual takes place before a girl reaches puberty. In Pokot, it is not a heinous offence for a girl to be initiated after the onset of menstruation or even pregnancy. K. Koloski (1967) reviews the Gusii initiation ceremonies in her M.a. thesis, University of London.

2. I use the term 'clitoridotomy' to refer to the Pokot operation of *twa. 'Clitoridotomy', according to Butterworths Medical Dictionary (1980), refers to "circumcision performed on the female" as distinct from *clitorideetony* which refers to "surgical removal of the clitoris". I do not use the terms 'excision' and 'infibulation', as the common definition of these as given by Anne Cloudsley, do not exactly apply to the Pokot operation (1981: 84).

Any Pokot word, whose literal meaning I was able to discover, I have translated in a footnote, or in brackets following the word. However, many of the words have obscure meanings and are not used outside the ritual context.

4. Kokome1 *kong, Koko; wife of, Mel; lick, Kong; eye. The Pokot never clearly explained the relevance of calling the woman operator 'wife of lick eye'. However, the operation of clitoridotomy could, by association, be seen as an action of 'licking something clean'.

5. The number four is commonly used in Pokot rituals, and is related to the Pokot belief in ancestors and directly associated with the four corners of the hearth, which a Pokot must touch when calling forth the spirit (or protector) of a baby soon after its birth.

6. *Pipi* plant is used medicinally by the Pokot to wash or clean open wounds. The medicinal value, and botanical names of plants I collected, are currently being analysed at Kew Gardens, London.
Kipuno: relates to the word kojmndo. This can be used to wean menstruation (for example, to ask if a young girl has reached puberty and started menstruating), or the lifting of restrictions and taboos (for example, in asking if people have completed the last purification rite after the death of a family member). The usage of this word implies that Pokot see the onset of menstruation as the beginning of a new phase for women, with Kipuno: the last public ceremony of initiation, 'culturally' defining the change of sexual and social status. In light of this meaning, it is interesting to note that the final public coming-out ceremony of male initiation is also called Kipuno.

8. The only times I have recorded the use of these leaves, is at the cleansing after clitoridotomy and childbirth. It may be that the leaves are only used for ritual purification rather than medically.

9. Molgut is a root which is usually chewed and used as a cure for coughs and throat infection. Apart from after clitoridotomy and childbirth, this type of blessing, which includes the spitting of aoigut, is only performed by men.

10. In-the initiation rite—of 'blaungu'—it's out that the initiates saear themselves with white to symbolically remove and purify the initiates from the 'terror' of menstrual blood (1956: 124). Though whitening in Pokot may be partially seen as a purification against menstrual blood, the girls in seclusion are not considered "beautiful", and the whitening serves to emphasize their polluted and unclean state. Peristiany, in considering the symbolic meaning of white in Pokot ritual, sees it as having auspicious qualities, and says it is used to protect initiates from heavy and dark powers (1975: 173).

11. At every advice session I have ever attended, the old women invariably become drunk. Beer is, in fact, expected as a payment by the initiates' families to the old women. Drunkenness is accepted at this time as part of the ritual, and it is a common occurrence for the old women to contradict each other as the afternoon wears on.
12. As we have seen (Chapter II), men, specifically elders, also try to control the rain through prayers addressed to llat: the rain god, asking for rain. In contrast to this, a woman, whose first born is a girl, is said to have the power to redirect the rain if it is unwanted.

13. According to the Pokot, tapo'h: Venus, the planet which brings the rain, is married to Mars, and their children are the smaller, duller stars clustered around them. When the bull, Mars, rises in the east, his wife, Venus, should go slightly down so that she lb not above him, and say, "Rain, so that you don't rain on me", which implies, "Do't urinate on me". If the bull follows or stays behind his wife, it is a bad omen, as it is when Mars stays in the west with the children and leaves his wife, Venus, alone in the east. These are inauspicious signs which indicate that it will not rain, and also that Pokot women will not bear children successfully, or that many young children will die.

14. According to the social ideal, a chemerl should not be pregnant. Therefore, it is interesting to note that pregnant initiates have their Bklmnmarked with white. This adds weight to the suggestion that the painting of chemerl with white, emphasizes their polluted*an3"unclean state: "It"should—be noted that boys in seclusion are smeared with red ochre. The two colours seem to indicate contrasting states. On the one side, girl initiates vs. boy initiates: on the other side, pregnant girls vs. non-pregnant girls.

15. Sukution means bamboo and, in this context, refers to the bamboo poles with which the mencho hut is made. At the time this ceremony of sukution takes place, the mencho hut is said to be dismantled.

16. There is no evidence in the Pokot material to support the Freudian interpretation that women want to become men. Instead, as the Pokot explain, and the following examples show, women enjoy teasing men about their own sexual desires.

17. We are not told, however, if Mgoni women also see semen as the most important factor in reproduction.
As we saw in the previous chapter, through the annual ritual of women's initiation, older women attempt to teach girls how they should behave as women. It is particularly significant that older women emphasize two seemingly contradictory themes during the initiation rite. On the one hand, they tell the girls they should follow the social ideal and obey their husbands and fathers. On the other hand, they emphasize that the girls should become strong married women, both as individuals and as part of a larger group. In women's initiation, these two themes are clearly articulated in statements and songs, or implied symbolically through phraeae and events.

In this way women express, and are therefore aware of, two different points of view in Pokot society. The first point of view corresponds to the male perspective; the second is only expressed by women and, together with the first, constitutes the female perspective. The second, or female point of view, arises only in respect to the first, or male point of view, and the social ideals which this endorses. In other words, the female point of view is concerned with how the social ideals, expressed in the male point of view, can be manipulated by women to limit men's influence and power which are legitimized by these social ideals.

In simple terms, the Pokot male perspective could be summed up as 'men control women, land and livestock'. The Pokot female perspective only partially agrees with this and could be summed up as, 'men control women, land and livestock, but this control is limited by women in a number of ways'. From a female point of view, the most important limitation of male control is focused around the control of female sexuality. Women perceive their own control of their sexuality and fertility as one of their main bargaining tools vis-a-vis men. Women regard their own sexuality and fertility HLth nride,
female initiation, hence: when an initiate comes bene after olitorldotoegr, women of the neighbourhood take over the house and the father must leave and sleep in a cave for the oamling three months; men must give up stock, both to the initiates and to the old women who eat as officiants of the ceremony; and, when sen are given a portion of the slaughtered stock, they are obliged to eat those parts of the goat conaldered less desirable and usually given to women.

Thus it is demonstrated through ritual that there are times when women have effective oontrol over men. Men, however, do not admit this publicly, as it is not part of the social ideal which la asserted as an absolute truth without inherent contradictions. Nevertheless, men do silently acknowledge the validity of women's olaims, which qualitatively changes the simple statement that 'men control women, land and livestock'. In fact, we have the existence of two contrasting statements expressed in different weys: the overt expression of the male ideal; and the covert expression of male acceptance of women's ability to limit male control. Both Pokot men and women use and manipulate these different forms of expression, and individuals or groups do so in different circumstances when it is to their advantage. Hie ability of Pokot to switch from one form of expression to the other, assures that a maximum flexibility is maintained at any one time in terms of decoding messages.

The existence of these two different views, is expressed most graphically by women to other women in their initiation rite. The mere fact that women reveal both forms of expression to the initiates, puts emphasis on their view that male control is limited. This, in turn, teaches the initiates that a great deal more flexibility end negotiation exists than is apparent in the public male ideal. In their initiation rite, women assert the view that they perceive the relations between men end women (particularly the relationship between individuals aa husbands and wives) as a flxible and negotiable contract, in which each sex takes the views of the other sex into account. In one sense, fmale initiation can be seen as en annual expression and restatement
of this contract. This is particularly interesting considering that in the public male view no such contract exists. In contrast to this, women state the nature of this contract, and their position of strength, within the context of the male order: it is only after women's initiation that women are allowed to bear children and marry, both of which are seen by men to underline their subordinate functional role via-A-via men.

For this reason it is important that, from the male perspective, women's initiation could be seen as a way of bringing women's procreative powers under social control. By redefining the biological change through initiation, girls become eligible for marriage, which should occur soon after initiation. From a male point of view, men control marriage and, after marriage, they impose their control over women and their sexuality through a number of rules and pollution taboos. This is exemplified by the fact that a husband should be the first to split a woman's clitoridotomy soon after initiation: a symbolic statement of his authority over his wife's sexuality and reproductive powers.

Women's initiation is also a public statement of women's individual and collective power, in which they focus on the control they see themselves as having over their own sexuality and childbirth. Women's initiation unites women on the basis of sex, age, and area. The solidarity amongst women 'age-mates' of one neighbourhood, increases over time as their participation in the initiation rite increases, and they attain a position of ritual authority over the younger women of the neighbourhood. Seen in broader social terms, old women's authority is closely linked to the maintenance of male control. However, their authority also has an independent significance amongst the women themselves. On an individual basis, initiation facilitates the separation between mother and daughter - a close, emotional relationship - and, over time, the unification of mothers and their daughters-in-law - a relationship often fraught with conflict. On a collective basis, initiation unites all women together, but a particular solidarity and bond is formed between the women of one neighbourhood and to a further extent, one community. The solidarity
amongst women forms the basis of power which women can use in direct opposition to men, but is primarily used to recreate a balance should men abuse their power.

In women's initiation we find a basic contradiction expressed regarding the control of female sexuality and fertility. The message which women seem to convey in their initiation rite, is that men try to control women's sexuality and procreative powers, but ultimately it is up to the women whether they let them do so or not. Women's initiation legitimizes giving birth, but it does not control pregnancy, nor does it assure that a woman's husband is necessarily the father of her children. In itself, the initiation rite has no direct influence over who will make a woman pregnant, nor when she will become pregnant. However, if a woman should do things in the 'ideal' way the rite will have a direct influence over both these factors. According to the male ideal, a woman should not be pregnant before initiation and should not have sexual intercourse after initiation before she marries. This way, a woman would only become pregnant after initiation and marriage, thereby ensuring that her husband would be the one to make her pregnant and be the father of her children. As we have seen, the ideal is not always what happens in practice. Not only are a high percentage of girls pregnant before initiation, but many women are pregnant before their first marriage, and even more women (50% in the Katu region) do not stay married to their first husbands.

Pokot women seem to be aware of the discrepancy between the ideal and the actual, and enjoy stating their sense of sexual pride in their own initiation rite. They also seem to enjoy mocking or teasing men about their attempts to belittle women's childbearing capacities, and to control their sexuality and fertility. Even if we look at women's initiation from a male perspective, and assume that through clitoridotomy women are offering men their sexuality, this could not be interpreted as a straightforward admission of female subordination. 'Offering' men their sexuality reinstates the fact that women have, and always will have, something men would like to have control over.
Another aspect of female initiation which cannot be interpreted solely as an admission by women of their subordinate status, is the fact that older women often reiterate and stress male values. Not only is it to women's advantage to allude to the notion that they support the same values as men (which gives them and their initiation rite additional status and respect), but, in practice, it is to their advantage to work with men rather than against them. X statement of women's power and solidarity does not necessarily have to be a statement in opposition to men. Through their initiation rite, Pokot women, and old women in particular, are expressing publicly that they agree with men, but, at the same time, making a statement of their separate identity as a group of women; or, to put it simply, that they are not men.

In the context of female initiation, old women act as mediators between male and female values. They 'teach' the individual initiates to be obedient and follow the patriarchal rules of society, although they knew themselves that many of the individual girls will not follow the advice they are given. This becomes increasingly evident when women's sections are heightened, at which time their own anxiety about the rules is often portrayed. The other important factor is that many of the old women themselves have had complex marriage histories (or gone against the very ideals they are supposed to be 'teaching'), but this does not detract from their position of status and authority amongst the women. In general, the criteria for gaining status and respect which women set for themselves, is different from the social ideals (for example, by being married to a wealthy man a woman does not gain status, respect, and authority amongst other women)

The picture which women portray in their initiation rite is not simply a of opposing points of view where men see women as subordinate, while women see themselves as powerful. Instead, women present more of an integrated picture, indicating that the main difference between the two perspectives is that each perspective places a different emphasis on female subordination and power. From the female perspective, women's individual and collective power, and their
ocntrol over sexuality and childbirth, are emphasised, while women's subordination, and men's control over their sexuality and women's procreative powers, is muted. Frco the male perspective, female subordination, and male ocntrol over female sexuality and fertility, is emphasized, while women's individual and collective power is kept muted. Both of these perspectives, with their different emphases, are articulated by women, although, in the context of women's initiation, the female perspective is dominant.

Let us now turn our attention to examining how the female perspective articulated in women's initiation, which emphasizes women's influence and power, corresponds to the influence women have in reality. This may be best explored by looking at the actual control men have over reproductive assets; women's sexuality and fertility, and over productive assets; land, stock, labour and produce. Within the male ideal, the assertion is held that men have complete control over the reproductive assets. Men claim that they alone control the marriage process (primarily by controlling the exchange of women through the payment of bridewealth), and, once married, it is assumed that the husband alone will father his wife's children. In practice, women have a great deal of influence over the marriage process and who will father their children. Mothers have a strong say in who their sons and daughters will marry. A mother's say in bridewealth negotiations stems from the influence she has over her husband and children; the rights in bridewealth her own relatives have (particularly her brothers); and her own ri'tit to transmit stock to her sons. A young woman has a considerable say in who she will marry, and can manage to get out of a marriage which she finds undesirable. As such, a woman also has a strong say in who will father her children, both before initiation and after marriage.

It is also claimed by men, and held as a social ideal, that men have complete control over the productive assets. Men have the overriding right to dispose of property and produce as they wish and, through marriage, they have complete rights over the labour of their wives and children. In practice, a
A woman influences the way in which her husband disposes of their property and produce, and can abolish his rights over her labour (and often her children's labour) through separation and/or divorce. A woman influences how her husband disposes of stock and land through her usufruct rights over property, may be in a strong position of control if her husband is using land, and to a lesser extent livestock, of her kin group. She also has recognized rights over subsistence produce, and if her rights are abused she has means of persuading her husband to take her wishes into account, particularly the threat of leaving him. Also, because the unit of production is extremely small and cultivation is labour intensive, a man is dependent on his wife and children to be able to produce a substantial crop. This, in turn, affects a man's ability to increase his herd and expand his sphere of exchange. For these reasons, a husband's control over the productive assets are clearly limited by his wife.

It has become evident that, amongst the agricultural Pokot, although there is a clearly articulated ideal of male control, it is not rigorously enforced. There is enough flexibility in the economic reality, to give women the chance to modify male control of both the reproductive and productive assets. However, it must be remembered that women's power end influence only limits male authority. An Imbalance between the sexes still exists, but this is less skewed, and women are more powerful, than has been previously recorded (Beech 1911, Edgerton and Conant 19^4)*

The female modification of male control has an effect on the relation between the sexes, particularly the relationship between husbands and wives. In practice, there is a great deal of negotiation and renegotiation which takes place in the husband/wife relationship. This is partially due to the fairly strong bargaining leverage a wife has with her husband, but it is also due to the acknowledged benefits a husband and wife will receive if they stay married and work together. Although it is possible for a man and a woman to survive and live separately on their own, it will not benefit either of them economical^
or socially to do so. A man would have a difficult time building up his herd and widening his sphere of exchange, and a woman living with her parents would make things less comfortable for herself and her children than if she had stayed with her husband.

Almost all Pokot men and women are married and live together as married couples, although women do not necessarily live with, or stay married to, their first husbands. The household, consisting of a married couple, and their unmarried children, is a relatively small unit of production. Husbands and wives are thus closely dependent on each other, and their children, for producing a subsistence. On the one hand, this close dependency may be a reason for negotiation between husbands and wives, while on the other hand, it may be a source of antagonism and conflict. In a close situation, with few alternatives, conflicts are bound to arise, particularly over the control and distribution of household resources. It is interesting that in the context of day to day interactions, the point of view women articulate concerning ownership, is closer to what actually happens than the perspective articulated by men.

This brings us to the broader question of how women are seen to be different and opposite to men, and also whether women have a different conception of the world than men do. The first part of the question relates directly to the more fundamental dyadic contrast between nature and culture. This issue was originally raised in discussion of binary oppositions by Levi-Strauss (1943, 1966), and discussed more recently, in relation to women, by Ortner (1974). Ortner writes that women are more closely identified with nature, which every culture devalues, while men are identified with culture, which, by asserting its control over nature, is seen to be superior to nature (1974: 72-3). KacCormack and Strathern (1980) have considered in detail the validity of using a hierarchical nature/culture contrast in a general sense, as well as questioning the specific definition and usefulness of this formulation in different cultures. I will concentrate on the latter aspect of this, and examine whether the nature/culture contrast, formulated by western science, is ±3 n·c·f·il in the
analysis of the Pokot material.

Throughout the thesis, I have stated that Pokot women are identified more closely with the domestic domain and childbearing capacities, while men are identified more closely with the public socio-political domain, having a powerful ritual control through their ability to communicate to the ancestral spirits. I have also stressed that these two domains cannot be seen as standing on their own, operating separately, or independently of each other. The female/domestic domain and the male/public domain are closely interdependent, the activities of one domain having a direct effect on the other domain. The question, however, is to what extent the Pokot equate the female sphere with 'nature', and the male sphere with 'culture'. Furthermore, do the Pokot perceive man/culture as being superior to woman/nature? To examine the nature : culture dyad, we must begin by clarifying the Pokot definitions of these categories, before we look at the question of control. However, as we have already seen from the discussion of male : female relations, it is impossible to make any simple statements about male superiority and control, as this must be closely analysed according to different contexts and situations.

There is no clear definition of what the Pokot might consider to be 'nature' and what to be 'culture'. Pokot make a definite distinction between what they call wu; forest or 'wild', which they identify as sany; outside, and the ko; household and domestic area, which they identify with ori; inside. Through ritual, people continually try to control the 'wild' and to a further extent the unseen forces of 'nature'. Pokot, however, do not view 'culture' as innately superior to 'nature'. There is no question that they try to control 'nature', but, for the Pokot, the 'natural' and the 'supernatural' are inextricably bound together. On the one hand, Pokot culture tries to control nature through its perceived control of the supernatural, on the other, the supernatural is a notion created by Pokot culture in respect to nature. Furthermore, for the Pokot, the forces of nature and the supernatural are at
times affected and controlled by Pokot themselves and their culture, while at other times, they perceive themselves and culture as controlled and affected by nature and the supernatural. M. Strathern (1980: 178) describes a similar idea but without referring to the supernatural, "culture is both the creative subject and the finished object; nature both resource and limitation, amenable to alteration and operating under laws of its own".

The other issue raised earlier was the question of control. As we have seen, the control of the natural/supernatural through ritual is in the hands of both men and women. As such, it makes it difficult to identify one sex as closer to either nature or culture, as well as complicating the issue of one sex having clear control over the other sex. Let us examine this in more specific terms. In Pokot, men try to devalue women because of their child-bearing capacities. Men also try to control women and their childbearing capacities, through marriage and various social rules and ideas about pollution. Given that Pokot men see women as closer to nature (because of their child-bearing capacities), and also to the supernatural (because of their association with rain and fertility), this does not result in the simple formula of men/culture being in control over women/denature. Given that Pokot perceive the natural and supernatural as sometimes being superior to themselves and culture, then male control over nature cannot be considered absolute. For the same reasons, women's identification with nature could be seen as making women as much superior to men as it makes them inferior.

The situation is made even more complex by the fact that women have recognized control over their 'natural' childbearing capacities. Although it is not recognized publicly, women have a great deal of control over matters concerning their sexuality and fertility, particularly in a ritual sense. As we have seen, there are ways in which women can prevent and terminate childbirth; they organize and control women's initiation; and women have the power to bless both after childbirth and after olitoridotaqy. Women are also called upon to invoke the ancestors at the ceremony of moi, if a woman becomes IT?
ill because of a peculiarly 'female problem'. The case of KokoYaranyang illustrates this point. KokoYaranyang dreamed that her child would die and claimed that onyot had come and pulled out her vaginal hair. Hoi was held and the usual songs and blessing were performed by the elders with women joining in the chorus. In addition to this, the older women of the neighbourhood went into the nearby bush, sway from the men, and by cursing chased sway the bad ancestral spirits, naming the "wife of onyot" as the particular culprit.

In Pokot, ritual control is, therefore, undeniably the responsibility of both men and women. There are, however, two distinct spheres of ritual control in Pokot which are essentially campiontary. The women's sphere of ritual control focuses primarily on childbirth and other women, while the men's sphere of ritual control focuses on the ancestors preventing sickness and death of both men and women. There is, however, a recognised link between the two spheres in the case where both riwoi women (women who have had 'abnormal' births) and their husbands can bless the relatives of the deceased. Ortner (1974) identifies ritual as part of culture. Using Ortner's definition, we cannot identify Pokot women simply and only with nature. In Pokot, the nature: culture categories are ambivalent and men cannot simply be identified with culture, any more than women can be identified with nature. Furthermore, the questions of control and superiority are complex and ambiguous. In so far as Pokot women exercise ritual control over nature, they must be aligned with culture just as men are. On the other hand, in so far as their ritual control is concerned with childbirth and women, while men's ritual control is concerned with communal matters, they are more aligned with nature and men more with culture. As such, the simple formula that men and culture are superior to women and nature, is not applicable to the Pokot material. Instead, we have Pokot women aligned with both culture and nature, while men are aligned more exclusively with culture. Women can be seen as mediators between culture and nature and, in so far S3 nature's value i3 ambiguous, so i7ccen's value is

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ambiguous and oscillates from superior to inferior and back again. Hen's value, on the other hand, is more consistently superior.

The question of how men and women bound themselves off from the 'wild' nature was discussed in detail by E. Ardener (1977). Ardener also raised the questions of whether women conceptualize their world in a different way than men do, and whether women are able to articulate their perception of the world. In a review of S. Ardener's work S. Ardener writes (1977: xii), "This dominant model may impede the free expression of alternative models of their world which subdominant groups may possess, and perhaps may even inhibit the very generation of such models .... [The subdominant group] might be relatively more 'inarticulate' when expressing themselves through the idiom of the dominant group, and silent on matters of special concern to them for which no accommodation has been made in it." E. Ardener goes on to explain that women often form such an 'inarticulate' group, and may be effectively 'mute'.

It is clear from the Pokot material that women are not a particularly wto group. Pokot women articulate very clearly a variety of ideas which are both of special concern to themselves anchor their relation to society and the dominant male model. E. Ardener would, however, explain this by saying that women are simply expressing themselves in the idiom of the male model, having transformed their own muted model into the dominant model. But how can we be sure of this? How can we know the degree women actually accept the male model, or just say that they accept it while subjectively relating to it in a number of different ways; or certainly in a different way than the way men do?

It has become clear that Pokot women manipulate different forms of expression, and change how and what they say in relation to the context they say it in.

In some situations, for example in discussing ownership in public, Pokot women articulate and appear to accept the male model when it is to their advantage to do so. However, when discussing their ownership rights in private, women tend to emphasize their own perspective, based on their particular interests, and how they see themselves and their interests as fitting into the...
larger modal. At other times, women may simply agree with the dominant male model, for example older women who act as officiants in women's initiation. As such, in the Pokot case, it would appear to be more useful to speak of the process of 'muting' rather than speaking of the entire group of women as mute.

X. Ardener also writes that women express their own muted model through obscure symbols or obscenities, and often what they are saying is only half acknowledged or understood. This begins with the assumption that women always want their messages to be made clear. I would suggest that there are times when women make their messages deliberately unclear. There is, of course, the other side of this, in that it is almost impossible to define whether these messages are really only half acknowledged, or if people - in this case men - are only 'saying' that they partially understand the messages, when in fact they understand the total message. It would be extremely presumptuous of the anthropologist to assume that he/she can understand the encoded messages of ritual while the people in that society cannot. In his discussion of rituals and symbols, I. Strecker (1981) also stresses this point, when he says, 'We should acknowledge the actors' competence for complex thinking, and concede to him the competence for sustained multivocality.'

It appears that, in Pokot, there are certain topics which are muted and others which are clearly articulated. However, it is still people who express their views on these topics and their views (or what they express) may differ in relation to their age and sex and the particular circumstance and situation. It is difficult to define whether it is the topic which is muted or the actors who are mute. Instead, it is important to view the two as closely related. For example, women may decide to keep a particular topic mute, while at the same time the association between fealeness and the topic may be the reason for the muteness. Also, things of special concern to fecales may be muted because they are difficult or complex subjects, and not only because they are associated with females.

I have already pointed out how the topic of sexuality, which is fraught
with ambiguities and problems, appears to be muted through the various pollution taboos. This may be partially due to the fact that, in a sexual relationship, women have as strong a bargaining position as men or even stronger because of their childbearing capacities. Pokot women express this fact, albeit at times indirectly. Men appear to mute women's a expression of this because it is in contradiction to the social/legal relationship between men and women. The sexual relationship raises questions about women's a position which cannot be resolved, so the entire topic is muted. Topics are, however, muted in various ways. It appears that, where there is no standardized solution, or dearly articulated rule, topics are muted by cloaking them in ambiguous ritual symbols. This way, all parties can interpret symbolic statements to their own satisfaction, without anything definite being said or articulated. This is borne out by the fact that women can articulate their views on sexuality and will do so publicly in the face of male insult, or if they feel their socio-economic position is threatened.

Even topics which are fluently articulated or expressed may involve the process of muting by either men or women. Articulate statements made by men, concerning male control and ownership, can hide an entire range of complex relations which are effectively muted by their dominant or articulated statements. Both men and women are aware of the muted aspects, but the image created is one of male control, and it again seems that women only give expression to muted aspects of a subject, on occasions which happen to be related to themselves.

In discussing my ideas with Jean Iydall, she questioned it by Hamar men and women have positive things to say, and are extremely articulate when expressing ideas about their close kin relations (for example, a Hamar man will speak positively about his mother, sister or daughter), but are much less positive when speaking about their spouses (especially in regard of how men speak about their wives). In Hamar, as well as in Pokot, a man's image may be more threatened vis-a-vis the woman he marries, because there is more space for
negotiation in the relationship. His other relationships are more fixed and based on a degree of historical fact. In Pokot, there is far less flexibility on the relationships based on age and kinship than there is in the relationship between the spouses. No one can change their age independently of others, and kin relations are manipulated only slightly, and not at all in the case of close kin. On the other hand, Pokot men and women have considerable say in both choosing their spouse, and in changing their spouse if the marriage situation becomes intolerable.

It is interesting that, in Pokot, although the relationship between husband and wife is continually renegotiated and extremely changeable, the stereotype which is articulated is that of an unequal relationship in which men have control over their wives. This is partially due to the fact that men mute women's opinions and views, and publicly articulate their own views through gender constructs and symbols which project male control. The aspect of Pokot society which is least articulated, in other words an aspect which is rarely seen or heard, is what is negotiated or agreed upon between men and women; especially between husbands and wives. The relationship between husbands and wives only becomes public when they have disagreements, rather than when they agree with each other. Only when things go 'wrong', or there are diversions from the practical order and social ideal, do the views of either men or women become articulated. As a result, the area of negotiated space between men and women, is often by definition silent or muted.

In the final analysis, it is clear that both men and women articulate and mute different ideas and topics at different times in different ways. However, women and female topics are more often mute, and women make their statements publicly amongst themselves only, while men and male topics are more clearly articulate, and men make their statements in public to both men and women. Pokot men and women do have different perspectives of the world, which stem from their different interests. Nevertheless, the individual perspective of each sex takes the other into account, although this acknowledgement is usually muted.
in the perspective which each sex articulates publicly. As such, there are aspects of both the male and female perspectives which are kept mute. Within their own perspective women mute male control and dominance, while within the male perspective men mute women's influence and power. For these reasons, I would suggest, there is an acknowledged area of negotiation which is held in common by both Pokot men and women. This area is by definition ambiguous and undefined because the set of values and different perspectives within it are in a constant state of flux and continually renegotiated.
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