

NAIROBI EVANGELICAL GRADUATE
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

AN EXAMINATION OF THE DECISION-MAKING
PROCESS AMONG THE DIGO MUSLIMS AND ITS
MISSIOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS FOR CHRISTIAN
WITNESS IN LIKONI-MOMBASA

BY
SAMUEL MWATU NDUNDA

A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate School in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master
of Arts in Missions (Islamic Emphasis)

JULY 2007

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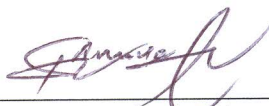
Student's Declaration

AN EXAMINATION OF THE DECISION- MAKING PROCESS AMONG THE
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FOR CHRISTIAN WITNESS IN LIKONI - MOMBASA

I declare that this is my original work and has not been submitted to any other College
or University for academic credit

The views presented herein are not necessarily those of the Nairobi Evangelical
Graduate School of Theology (NEGST) or the Examiners

(Signed)



Samuel Mwatu Ndunda

July, 2007

ABSTRACT

This study seeks to examine the decision-making process among the Digo Muslims of Likoni – Mombasa, as influenced by their social systems and kinship patterns, which in turn may impact conflict resolution and Christian witness among them. The research discusses the historical background of the Digo people, their descriptions, the penetration of Islam into Digoland, the Islamization of the Digo people and the Islamic teachings on the process of decision-making.

In order to accomplish this research, a qualitative research methodology was applied. Data was collected through open-ended interviews, structured and unstructured interviews, as well as modest participant observation. It was then analyzed and interpreted using the taxonomic analysis as specified by Spradley (1980, 112).

In light of the command of our Lord Jesus Christ and also the current resurgence of Islam, conflict resolution and evangelism among Muslims communities cannot be an option for the church of Christ. With this realization in mind, the author felt moved to examine the process of decision making among Muslims, as this is the only way that missionaries can engage Muslims in making decisions for Christ. In this regard, this study will be used to help missionaries to develop relevant strategies and apply them in solving the conflicts that keep erupting among the Islamic communities. Concurrently, these strategies will be applied for Christian witness.

It was discovered that the principle that no community of Muslims, large or small, should be without *ul al-amr* (a decision-making body) plays a great role among the Digos. According to Surah 42: 38, believers' affairs are run by consultation amongst themselves. Since the choice of the decision-makers is the first and an important step in the running of the affairs of a community, as will be suggested later in this study, this choice is also subject to the principle of consultation and must therefore be made by a process of election that involves the whole community. After their election, the decision-makers still remain bound by the principle of consultation. It was discovered that after the elders are elected they remain in power as long as they live. Additionally, they cannot decide whatever they desire or whatever suits them, but rather must reach their decisions after due consultation.

T0

This research is dedicated to my beloved wife Beatrice Kaveke (*Betty*) and our lovely son Timothy Mwatu (*Timo*).

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

My deepest gratitude first and foremost goes to my beloved wife Beatrice and our son Timothy. Their presence, prayers, encouragements, patience and support kept me going. I praise God for using them as a channel of blessing to me.

Special thanks to my mentor, Dr. Stephen Sesi and his wife Josephine for their amazing love to me and my family. The Sesi's have come alongside us all through our stay at NEGST. It is for this reason that we consider them our spiritual parents. I lack words to express my sincere appreciation for all that they have done for us. I specifically thank Dr. Sesi for helping me to develop my topic for this study and for his constant guidance and friendly advice as I undertook the study.

Dr. Caleb Kim who is my Academic Advisor also deserves a big thank you. His inspiration has greatly influenced my way of thinking and analyzing issues in a scholastic way. I consider myself privileged to have learned under Dr. Kim's feet. His steady encouragement kept me focused.

I also acknowledge Dr. Henry Mutua who, besides his wise counsel, kept me on my toes. I will never forget how he constantly reminded me to work on my thesis lest time catch up with me. It would be difficult to accomplish this study without Dr. Mutua's steadfast encouragement and motivation.

I am also so grateful to the entire Missions Department under the leadership of Dr. Sesi, the Head of Department. I am humbled by the tremendous support I received. On the same note, I take this opportunity to thank God for the NEGST scholarship fund of which I was a beneficiary. I give God the glory for all these provisions, without which my stay at NEGST would not have been actualized.

I thank God for different churches that have supported us in one way or another during our stay at NEGST. These include Africa Inland Church (AIC) Kalukuni (my local church), AIC Kithimani and finally AIC Ngong Hills for giving my family an opportunity to serve with them whilst at NEGST and for standing with us in times of need.

I also appreciate the input of my parents Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Mukula, my in-laws Mr. and Mrs. Jones Kimeu, together with our many friends and relatives who encouraged me while at NEGST. There are times when the going became too tough for us as a family. It was at such times that they came in and gave me moral support. It would have been too strenuous without their input.

Above all, I am grateful to God. It is through him and by his grace that this project was accomplished. I believe that it is God who, for his divine good purpose, has brought all these people into my life. I ascribe all honor and glory to his holy name. I pray that by his strength I shall apply the many things that I have learned at NEGST as I serve him in the field. To Him be the glory forever and ever.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Life is colored with moments that demand human beings to make pertinent decisions. In actual sense, some options are avoidable while others are not.

Nowadays, there are various conflicts among different people groups. For instance, the past few years have witnessed a number of violent incidents in areas of the countries inhabited predominantly by Muslims.

These incidents vary widely in makeup, and include internal conflicts within Muslim community or communities. Additionally, anti-government urban riots (as occurred in Mombasa and Lamu in 1992 and 1993), rural protests and more recently, beginning in August 1997, violent raids in Likoni and other parts of Kwale District on the southern Kenya coast have been evidenced (Sperling [article on line]).

In connection to these conflicts, Hartford (journal on line) shares a similar sentiment with the present author when he narrates that “the Likoni violence was one of the worst incidents of ethnic cleansing in the country’s history”. While such instances of conflict can be analyzed in purely political, economic and social terms, they differ from other apparently similar instances in that they occur within a Muslim context and may embody a distinct Muslim character

As if this is not enough, African traditional religions continue to manifest vitality among the Digo people in Likoni area despite the intensity of Christian missionary efforts which have marked the history of various parts of Digoland and Africa at large. This fact can be seen in the worship of African deities, the homage paid to the ancestors, and the recourse to divination, magic, and other rituals (cf.

Bascom and Herskovits 1959, 3). As pointed out in Bethanyeng (article on line), the religious practices of the Digo are deeply rooted in spiritism and folk Islam. This makes reaching them a very difficult task.

Motivation for the Study

In this study, the researcher's interest is in the decision-making process of the social group called the Digo people. The present author believes that once a clear understanding of the process through which Digo Muslims make their decisions is discovered, the same principle will be used in attempting to reach them. This is a crucial study because such issues as conflict management and resolution, as well as evangelism to the Islamic communities will never be achieved without a proper understanding of the subject stated. In addition, missionaries to the Islamic world can use the same understanding to challenge Muslims to make decisions to accept Christ into their lives. The present author, therefore, is motivated to look into the issue of resolving conflict, firstly with God and then with fellow man.

Concisely, there is no way that human beings can avoid making decisions in life. In support to this argument, Roger Shinn goes on to state, "to delay a decision is itself a decision" (1982, 5). The present author concurs with Shinn's statement and is for this reason motivated to undertake this study with the hope that it will help in the effort of bringing the peace of God to his people as they make decisions that honor his name.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this research is to describe how the Digo social systems and kinship patterns relate and to determine the process of decision-making among the

Digo people in order to advise the church in her Christian witness among them and to help the Digos in managing and resolving the conflicts that keep recurring among them. It is the belief of the present author that analyzing peoples' ways of making decisions is important in missions because, as Newlands George contends, we live in a pluralist society in which different standards and values abound (1985, 2).

Therefore, getting to understand which standard works for the Digo people is crucial, lest we use our standards of decision making and lose it all.

Objectives of the Study

The present study will help the researcher, missionaries and the entire church to gain insight into and understanding of the Digo social systems and kinship patterns and to discover how these influence their process of decision-making. This knowledge will help in formulating missiological strategies for Christian witness as well as social ministry among Digo Muslims.

Goals

The goal of this research is to help the researcher and the church at large to understand how Digo social systems and kinship patterns influence the process of decision-making among the Digo Muslims of Likoni – Mombasa and to provide an appropriate approach for a holistic gospel outreach based on their worldview. By 'holistic gospel outreach' the author has conflict resolution and management in mind as well as other issues of concern such as evangelism.

Thesis Statement

In this research, the researcher attempts to examine how social systems and kinship patterns influence the process of decision-making among Digo Muslims in Likoni – Mombasa.

Significance of the Study

The results of this study are very significant in a number of ways. Firstly, the findings are considered an answer to the researcher's long-time prayer that the Muslims in Likoni may be reached with the gospel message. While working at the Polana Hotel in Mombasa town and living in Likoni, the researcher witnessed the reality of Islamic resurgence in the area. It was through such an experience that the researcher's passion for reaching the Digos arose.

To the Researcher

This research helps the researcher to understand the Digo social systems and kinship patterns and how the two influence their decisions-making process. This is of fundamental significance to the researcher, as the delay in the breakthrough of the gospel among the Digos is attributed to the lack of clear understanding of this decision-making process.

To Missionaries

Missionaries to the Muslim communities need to understand the way in which people view reality (their worldview) and decide issues in life. This is crucial because it directly affects the way they live and behave, as well as their beliefs. The present author concurs with Charles Kraft, who contends that missionaries need to deliberately understand the quality and extent of a people's cultural biases in order to

reduce misunderstandings and ensure that the message is not distorted, but received as intended (2003: 48). Consequently, the place of the messenger cannot be overemphasized, since his attitude and the people's attitude towards him affects the effect of the message. The present author believes that if the local people are involved in analyzing their own culture, then the chances of the change being embraced are very high.

To Missiology

In reality, different churches and missionary agencies have been trying to reach the Digo people in the Likoni area with the Good News in vain. It is the assumption of the researcher that unless the church grasps their social systems and kinship patterns and how they decide issues, the Digo community in Likoni will remain 'unreached' with the gospel because the strategies employed will remain irrelevant.

It is also anticipated that the Africa Inland Church (AIC) Likoni, among other evangelical churches in Islamic areas, will adopt the content of this study in their evangelistic entrepreneurship to the Muslims for effective results. As a consequence, the researcher hopes that the findings of this study will provide a considerable step as far as developing a missionary strategy is concerned, which in turn will be used by those training in Christian institutions that focus in Islamic studies.

Problem Statement

This study is an examination of the process of decision-making among the Digo Muslims in Likoni - Mombasa and how it is influenced by their social systems and kinship patterns and its implications for Christian witness.

Research Questions

1. How does the social system of the Digo people of Likoni – Mombasa influence decision making in their community?
2. How do kinship patterns impact decision-making among the Digo people of Likoni – Mombasa?
3. How are decisions drawn by the Digo Muslims of Likoni - Mombasa?
4. Who has the final authority in terms of decision-making among them?

Limitations

Substantive Limitations

Since the researcher is an outsider with very limited understanding of the Digo language (Chidigo), it was feared that the language barrier would be a challenge. In an attempt to overcome this limitation, the Kiswahili language was used in collecting data, nevertheless, the researcher involved an interpreter in times of need.

Methodological Limitations

In particular, the methods used for collecting data for this research were limited to library research, ethnographic interview, unstructured and semi-structured interview as well as participant observation. The library research was used to develop assumptions through literature review while the other methods were employed in the field for data collection. Based on these methodological limitations, the researcher undertook this study.

Delimitation

This study confined itself to understanding the process by which the Digo people make their decisions and its implications for Christian witness. The researcher chose to deal with the Digo tribe in particular because tribes have been regarded as “the locus of human contentment that political form in which sociality and naturalness come together to near perfection” (Lawrence 2002, 39). In addition, tribes have also been seen in narratives of evolution as the crucible of psychological, social, and even moral promptings (Ibid.).

The research was conducted at Likoni – Mombasa and was only directed to the Digo people. In other words, the researcher did not concern himself with the non-Digos who live in Likoni. It is in order to note that this study is phenomenological in nature and so, as Creswell writes, it focuses on phenomena rather than the life of individuals. Succinctly, this study sought to understand the meanings and experiences of individuals about the phenomenon of decision making process (1998, 38).

Assumptions

The researcher holds the assumption that understanding people’s way of decision-making is crucial in reaching them for Christ. By reaching the Digo for Christ, the present author has in mind conflict resolution as well as evangelism. He holds the view that there are some good traits in every culture that Christians can use as points of contact in sharing the gospel.

It is also the assumption of the researcher that the beliefs held by the Digo Muslims of Likoni – Mombasa determine their process of decision-making and their response to the gospel message. In connection to this, the researcher further assumes that the Digo people remain resistant to Christianity because Christian missionaries

have overlooked the whole idea of the process of decision-making and how these decisions are influenced by the Digo social system and kinship patterns. It is also assumed that the majority, if not all, of the informants are able to communicate in the Kiswahili language.

Finally, this research was undertaken with a clear understanding that there is no African culture or community that has not been affected in some way by European contact. Bascom William and Melville Herskovits state, “the cultures of Africa have been adapted and modified by contacts from Europe and the Near East which long antedate the events that have made headlines in the recent years” (1959, 3). In regard to this reality, the author assumes that the Digos have also experienced a change of some sort in terms of their culture.

Definitions of Key Terms and Phrases

The following terms and phrases have been used in this study and have been defined as follows:

Digo(s):

The Digo people are part of the *Mijikenda* (the nine tribes) believed to have their origin from Shungwaya in Somalia. As Sesi Stephen points out, “the Digo people (singular *Mdigo*, plural *Wadigo* and their land *Undigoni*) live along the coast of Kenya and Tanzania. They speak a vernacular language, *Chidigo*, and many of them are able to understand and speak Swahili, as a trade language” (2003, 5). In this study, research is limited to the Digo people who live in Likoni – Mombasa.

Decision:

In this research work the word decision is taken to refer to the choice undertaken by a group to act in one way rather than another (Johnson 1983, 13).

Decision-Making Process:

This has to do with the practice of coming into consensus about something important or sorting out an issue, especially within a group of people or within an organization. As stated earlier in this thesis, the researcher will seek to find out the process of decision-making among the Digo Muslims in Likoni – Mombasa.

Social Systems:

In this study, social systems are connected with activities in which people meet and relate with each other. In the case of the Digo people, some of the social systems that will be looked into include: primary socialization, Islamic and secular education among the Digos, marriage, remarriage and divorce (both in cultural and Islamic perspectives).

Kinship Patterns:

Kinship pattern refers to family interrelation. Kinship is a feeling of being close to somebody because you have similar origins or attitudes. The researcher looks into the matrilineal and patrilineal kinship patterns among the Digo people and sees how this influences decision-making.

Kaya:

In this study, the term *kaya* is used to refer to bushy shrines (place of worship) which were the original homes of the Digo people. Before the Digo increased in population, they lived in fortified homesteads (kayas) on mountain ridges or in thick forests (Sesi 2003, 44).

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter is a review of the literature that serves as a guide to the topic under study. The historical background of the Digo people will be covered, as well as their descriptions, the penetration of Islam into Digoland and how the Digos became Islamized and the Islamic teachings on decision-making. This section is important, as it will clarify the problem being investigated and at the same time interact with other works that have been written on the same or related subjects. Most materials are taken from various libraries, while others were accessed from the internet.

An Overview of the Digo People

The majority of the Digos who live in Likoni - Mombasa are folk Muslims. The term 'Folk Muslim' in this sense is taken to refer to those Muslims who profess Islamic faith but at the same time practice and perform traditional rituals as a way of life. In an article by the *Bethanyeng* it is argued that, "Islam is more widely accepted among the Digo than among any of the other Mijikenda tribes". Nevertheless, ties with traditional practices, such as animism and ancestor worship, still have more influence on the Digo community than does Islam. Animism is the belief that non-human objects have spirits while ancestor worship is the practice of praying to deceased ancestors for help and guidance (Ibid.).

The Historical Background of the Digo People

Concerning the historical background of the Digo people, it is believed that Digo ancestors fled from Shungwaya between the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century due to a conflict that arose between the Galla and the Somali and settled at the coast in their fortified homestead called *Kaya* (Allen 1993, 38). Arguing from credible evidence from historical records and recent archaeological findings and interpretations Joseph Kimaryo (article on line) points out that historically, Swahili people are descendants of Bantu and Cushitic speaking people who settled along the East African coast in the first millennium. At this point, it is worthwhile to note that the East African coast stretches more than a thousand kilometers from the northern end of Kenya to the southern end of Tanzania. As of today, the Digo people live along the coastal strip of Kenya, mainly from the southern part of Mombasa town down to Tanga in Tanzania.

Kimaryo continues to argue that some non-Africans, particularly Arabs and Persians, were absorbed into the Swahili population over the different historical epochs of the East African coast. At this point, the historic Swahili people remained decidedly African in ancestry and culture (Ibid.). Additionally, Kim Caleb relates that the Swahili people are believed to have originated in Shungwaya from where they spread southwards to the rest of the East African coast (2004, 49 – 50).

Description of the Digo People

In his dissertation, Sesi Stephen Mutuku describes the culture of the Digo as centered on their homestead (*kaya*). He continues to argue that traditional *kaya* “were places of refuge during the days when they were a smaller population and had to defend themselves from the Oromo, Portuguese, Arabs and Masai raiders” (2003, 44).

The *Bethanyeng* (article on line), points out that the Digo tribe formerly lived in large, fortified villages; but today their villages only consist of about forty huts each. The shape of each hut clearly indicates the type of villagers who live inside. For instance, the huts of elders are round, while those of other people are rectangular. Both Sesi and *Bethanyeng* share the same opinion that although some Digos have adopted modern styles of construction, the traditional life styles are still maintained especially by the elderly. One example of spiritism is their use of blood sacrifices. Such sacrifices are very significant to the Digo, especially in the exorcism of evil spirits. This means that witchdoctors are also consulted regularly. On many occasions, witchdoctors are visited following accusations of witchcraft especially at funerals, either as a result of the dying person naming the supposed witch or by expert divination (Stewart and Strathern 2004, 127).

Evidently, most Digos practice syncretistic religion. Most of the Digo people who are over forty years of age have no real understanding of the Qur'an. Only a few of them have studied Islam in any depth, and most of them have only a superficial knowledge of its principles and doctrines. However, its presence among the Digo over the past eighty years has not gone entirely unnoticed. Its existence has altered both religious and political structures (Ibid.). For example, the author, having lived in Digoland for over six years, observed that the Digo people have adopted new outfits and diets from their Muslim Arabian neighbors. Although they know no religious reason for wearing the black veil, the Digo women wear it to show their respect for their husbands. It is this nominal identification with the Muslim religion while maintaining African traditions that is referred to as 'Folk Islam'.

Prayer Letters on the Digo (journal on line) states, "Fearful is a perfect word in describing the more than five thousand Digo people living along the coast of Kenya

and Tanzania. They fear almost everything, but above all else - witchcraft.” Among the Digos, many children and adults (especially women) are seen wearing small leather pouches around their waist or neck. These are believed to protect them from evil spirits (Kim 2004, 112 – 114).

In summary, this relates to what Hiebert Paul Shaw and Tienou observe that among folk Muslims (which include the Digo people), witches are believed to be able to kill people at a distance and master spirits (*jinn*). They are seen as antisocial, evil and malevolent beings living lives opposite to that of normal human beings with special ties to owls, snakes, hyenas, and baboons, and are believed to transform themselves into wolves, rabbits, horses, toads, and other animals (1999, 149).

Islam and the Digo People

Jomier Jacques asserts that the Muslim presence on the East African soil began with groups of political refugees and traders who came from the Arabian-Persian gulf. She states that, “it was the suppression of slavery, combined with the fact that Muslims were opposed to European education, which allowed Islam to spread in the coastal area” (1989, 33). As Bernander Gustaf observes, Islam is easily impressed by the religious and cultural conditions, which have previously existed among a people in which it has obtained a domicile (1957, 49). In addition, Emory Law (article on line) holds that Islam was an integral part of the East African coastal culture as early as the first century AH (After Hijra). He continues to reveal that Islam arrived on the coast through contact with religious teachers, merchants and slave traders. For this reason, it is strongly believed that the first propagators of Islam were a group of citizens of the Great Shungwaya, a ruined settlement opposite Pate Island in Kenya on the northern coast.

Penetration of Islam into Digoland

According to Allen James (1993), Shungwaya citizens (also referred to as Shiraz propagators) became Muslim converts after spending some time in the Muslim world, especially Shiraz in Persia under the Buwayhid rule. On their return home, they spread their new faith in their homeland and the region as a whole. While the Shungwaya Muslims could have been inspired by Shiraz Shiite Islam and particularly the Buwayhid court, on returning home they did not adopt Shiite Islam wholesale. These Muslims modified Middle Eastern Islam to suit the society of Great Shungwaya and other Eastern African coastal settlements, resulting in an East African variant of Islam or what is known as Shirazi Islam. Thus, most indigenous African Muslims in the region are Sunnis (Ibid., 53).

Naturally, the northern coast was the first to adopt Islam under the influence of the Shungwaya Muslims. Islam provided the medium to the different African communities to build up a common cultural tradition and language known as Swahili. By the beginning of the 14th century, Islam and the inherent Swahili cultural package had spread all over the East African coast. The early Swahili people were known as Shiraz Swahili by virtue of their association with Shiraz Islam and associated traditions (Trimingham 1964, 1)

The Islamization of the Digo People

Sesi Stephen describes the process of Islamization among the Digo as gradual. He states that in reality the conversion process of the Digo was a slow and painful process that took approximately 100 years (2003, 81). He goes on to argue that Islam entered Digo culture mostly as an addition to their religious practice, rather than a

replacement. It was introduced through the missionary efforts of the traders who settled at the coast, married local women and established contacts as they were doing business with the local people (Ibid., 82ff).

Since Digos have much in common with the Islamic doctrine because of their beliefs and worship of spirits (jinn), adopting Islam to them was not difficult. Kim observes that Islam did not eliminate pre-Islamic beliefs and customs from the new religious system in the process of indigenizing Islam onto the old African soil; rather it incorporated them. For this reason, new converts did not have to discard their old traditions (2004, 51).

In line with these arguments, the *World Mission Centre* (article on line) recounts that animism has a strong influence on African Islam, as people still hold singing and prayer ceremonies and wear charms to appease a variety of spirits. Today, being Muslim is part of the Digo identity. Most Digos live on small farms and produce only enough for survival. Regrettably, among the Digo people, being hardworking is associated with a slave background and success is attributed to witchcraft, so there is little motivation to improve techniques (Ibid.).

In addition, Atterbury Anson notes that Islam is an intensely formal and ritualistic system - a religion of works that does not affect the heart or cause transformation of life (1969, 110). Based on this principle, it should be underscored that the Digo people are not conscious of Islam except during the month of Ramadan. They suspend all their cultural healers, and medicine men and women suspend their healing, witchcraft and magic during this month. This month ends with the grand celebration of *id-ul-fitr*. These are the most celebrated days among the Digos. In his thesis, Asland affirms that *baraka* (blessings) is a very central theme in Digo life. He

argues that in their religious practice, their focus is on how to obtain as much power and blessing as possible and to avoid *laana*, which means curse (2005, 27).

Residents of Likoni still live under fear following ethnic clashes that befell them in the late 1990s. In regard to the Likoni brutality that spread to various parts of Kwale and Kilifi, analysts express fears that the growing radicalization of Islam and the newly acquired assertiveness of Kenya's Muslim leaders could become a recipe for future ethnic and religious strife (Hartford, Weekly Review [journal on line]).

Islamic Teaching on Istikhara (Decision Making)

Upon reading different literature, the author realizes that there are established Islamic rules, based on the Hadith and the Qur'an, which should be considered when making decisions. According to Aneesah Nadire (article on line), the Holy Qur'an and *Sunnah* of the Prophet are rich in wisdom and are the best examples of appropriate Islamic behavior in family life. For instance, it is important that those seeking marriage study the examples put forth by Allah and His Messenger in choosing a mate as well as resolving marital problems.

In his article, Nadire clearly states that, "the prayer of *Istikhara* (decision-making), a tradition of Prophet Muhammad, should also be undertaken in the selection of a mate, asking Allah's guidance in the choice of the mate best to assist one in preserving his or her *Iman* (faith) in order to prepare for the *Ahkirah* (Life after death)".

In his article on line, Ahmad Shafaat suggests that Muslims claim to base their decisions on the following Qur'anic verses:

1. "O you who believe! Obey God and obey the Messenger and those from among you who are in charge of your affairs; and if you differ over any matter, refer it to God and the Messenger, if you do believe in God and the last day." (4:59)

2. “(Believers are those) who run their affairs by consultation among themselves”(42:38)
3. “And consult them (O Prophet) in matters (of public concern)” (3:159)
4. “And let there among you be a group of people who invite to all that is good, who enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong” (3:104)

Shafaat further points out that Muslims should run their affairs through a decision-making body (*ul al-amr*). According to him, the above Qur’anic verses assume the existence of such a body. Hadith states it more explicitly, teaching that wherever there are three or more Muslims, they must choose one of themselves as their leader (*amir*). It is also interesting to note that while Hadith sometimes talks of *amir*, the Qur’an only talks of the plural *ul al-amr*, which should be interpreted to mean that while there should be a single person as the head of a group of Muslims, the decision-making power should rather be exercised by a body or bodies consisting of more than one person; in other words, power should not be concentrated in the hands of a single person, except in the case of very small groups (Ibid.).

The first pillar of the Islamic organizational structure is therefore the principle that no community of Muslims, large or small, should be without *ul al-amr* or a decision-making body. The second pillar is that the community must choose this body. One of the Qur’anic passages quoted earlier (Surah 42:38) says that the believers’ affairs are run in consultation amongst themselves. Since the choice of the decision-makers is the first and most important step in the running of the affairs of a community, this choice is also subject to the principle of consultation and must therefore be made by a process of election that involves the whole community.

After their election, the decision-makers still remain bound by the principle of consultation. They cannot decide whatever they desire or whatever suits them, but rather must reach their decisions after due consultation. When differences arise among

some sections of the community (including the decision-making body), they are referred to God and His Messenger (Surah 4: 59).

Johnson summarizes decision making in a group setting with these words:

In making decisions of any sort, a group reveals itself as a group, and it does that by becoming itself as a group. Decision-making is fundamental articulation of a group's life. The process by which decision is reached tells of the nature of the groups in a way other forms of ritual sometimes amiss. Perhaps a community loudly proclaims its democratic lifestyle – and at work, rest, and meals all members hold all things equally. But if the community's decisions are made by executive decree, the claim to equality is empty; the group actually has an authoritarian structure. Conversely, if decisions on entrance and advancement, leadership and responsibility are made by a genuinely popular vote, that process reveals the group to be democratic in a way that propaganda never could (1983, 15).

The Digo Social System and Kinship Patterns

It is of paramount importance to bear in mind that “the study of kinship and marriage is above all that of relations between the generations and the sexes” (Freedman 1978, 33). To illustrate this point, Maurice Freeman continues to suggest that the human infant is first of all his mother's responsibility and remains bound to her by a set of mutual rights which may extent beyond life (Ibid.).

The Digo Lineage Principle

Besides the fact that Islam has its place in the Digo community; family and *ukoo* (clan) remain a unifying factor. The lineage principle permeates almost all economic, political and religious activities among the Digo. It is crucial to note that the Digos inheritance lineage has changed from being matrilineal to patrilineal due to the influence of the Arabic and Western lifestyles, though a few of them still find their identity in the matrilineal lineage (World Mission Centre [article on line]). It seems that the reality of rivalry towards Christianity is connected to the changing of the inheritance lineage.

Marriage

In the Prayer Letters on the Digo (journal on line), it is pointed out that, marriage is a contractual agreement among the Digo, and is often broken – leaving many broken homes. Promiscuity is common amongst the Digo people and this has led to the spread of HIV/AIDS among the Digo community in Likoni - Mombasa. As gathered from Bethanyeng (article on line), it is clear that the decision to marry or not to marry is laid on the young man's docket. When a young Digo man marries, he must pay the normal bride price of four heads of cattle, two goats or sheep, and palm wine. He is then incorporated into the bride's family. Eventually, as he demonstrates leadership qualities, he will be accepted into the body of tribal elders.

The Extended Family

On the other hand, Digos draw their identity from belonging to a group (Asland 2005, 29). According to Abd-Al-Masih most Muslims find it difficult to become Christians because of their ties to the extended family. He argues that most Muslims are still not conscious of an independent "I" but live rooted in the 'We of their clan' (n.d., 17)

Economy

World Mission Centre (article on line) observes that though some Digos earn extra money by fishing in the ocean and farming, which is done in small scale, some move into the city to work. In essence, unemployment remains a big problem and divorce and single parenthood are increasing as a consequence to the idle lifestyle they have adopted leading to a pathetic situation among the Digo. On the whole, the

traditional Digo society is breaking down with the influence of Islam and the modern world (Ibid.)

Agriculture and Trade

Digos mainly depend on agriculture though it is very underdeveloped. They are probably in the lowest twenty five percent economically of Kenya's tribes. Since Digoland was generally neglected by colonial administration, formal education is not emphasized (Asland 2005, 37). This definitely has contributed to a great extent to the economical situation in the Digoland.

On the other hand *Bethanyeng* (article on line) suggests that the Digo people for many years have been involved in trade with Muslim Arabs. As a result, they have enjoyed a better standard of living than most of their neighboring tribes. In addition to trading, farming and fishing are two other sources of income for the Digo. Their principal crop is 'manioc' a small shrub with thick roots that are eaten like potatoes. They also grow sesame, corn, rice, and beans. 'Palm wine' is a popular drink produced from the palm tree (coconut).

Tourism

As Muigai Andrew (article on line) observes, tourists are attracted to Likoni as they come to tour Mombasa city. He further observes that Mombasa is considered to be the oldest human settlements on the Eastern seaboard of the African continent and having been in existence for many years, it is mentioned in writings of Arab, Roman and Egyptian travelers. These events date as far back as two thousand five hundred years ago.

Following this reality a substantial number of people from the Digo community depend on tourism industry for their survival. Since most Digos are not

educated, it is difficult to get good jobs in the beach hotels or other tourism centers. Consequently, majority of them engage in odd jobs such housemaids and gardeners, which do not do not earn them good income.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

This chapter deals with the methodology that has been adopted by the present researcher as a way of collecting relevant and helpful information. Since the problem under study in this research is also descriptive in nature, the researcher also employs the descriptive research method.

Research Design

In his book on ‘research methods’ Mugenda and Mugenda argue that qualitative research methods enable the researcher to collect data and explain a particular phenomenon more deeply and exhaustively (1999, 197). In order to understand the social system of the Digo people, the qualitative research method is employed. As Creswell puts it, a qualitative approach is one in which the researcher often makes knowledge claims based primarily on constructivist perspectives and uses strategies of inquiry such as narratives, phenomenologies, ethnographies, grounded theory studies, or case studies (2003, 18). Based on the arguments above, the researcher collected information with the primary objective of developing apt conclusions from the data collected.

Creswell further argues that the major purpose of descriptive research is that it describes or examines the state of affairs as it exists. This means that the researcher is able to report his findings accurately. In addition, the descriptive method enables the researcher collect information by interviewing different individuals thus it can be used

when collecting information about people's attitudes, opinions, habits or any of the variety of education and social issues (Ibid., 71). In regard to this, Asland argues that descriptive research generally serves to develop theory. He explains the descriptive method as "what has been or is true in a situation and then provides an explanation of the theory developed" (2005, 6).

In view of the fact that the qualitative and descriptive methods are too diverse for this research, the researcher used an anthropological approach, which is a branch of qualitative (and descriptive) research. In accordance to Spradley's suggestion of what anthropological study entails (1980, 3), the researcher traveled to Likoni – Mombasa and lived with the people he proposed to carry out his research from. This enabled him to participate in activities, ask questions and get to interact with his informants at personal level.

Methods Employed in Data Collection

McKinney Carol points out that this method of data collection consists of anything that documents the culture in focus. This includes field notes, photographs (picture taken with camera), pictures (photographs as well as pictures painted, or sketched), artifacts, tape recording, videotapes, written documents (books, letters, diaries, census and tax records), as well as any cultural databases available and anything else on that particular culture (2000, 81).

Ethnographic Interviews

The researcher recorded his data soon after arriving from the research site to avoid forgetting any important information. As McKinney argues, this is the time when the researcher finds behavior patterns fresh, striking, and new (Ibid., 89). The

present author also interviewed different people at Likoni – Mombasa. According to Mugenda and Mugenda, ethnographic interviews have to do with person-to-person interaction between the researcher and the people being researched which are more like a series of friendly conversations into which the researcher slowly introduces new elements to assist informants to respond as informants (1999, 155). As a matter of fact, the main purpose in ethnographic interviews is to make the informant gradually take more control of the talking. Spradley believes that this opens opportunities for discovering the cultural knowledge of the informant (1979, 59).

Basically, the ethnographic research method involves description and interpretation of a culture of social group or system. It involves constant and consistent observation of the group typically through participant observation in which the researcher is immersed in the day-to-day lives of the people through one-on-one interviews with members of the group (Creswell 1998, 58). Creswell further argues that in this method, the researcher studies the meanings of behavior, language and interactions of the culture-sharing group (Ibid.). In simpler terms, ethnography is the work of describing a culture. Not from the researcher's point of view but from the natives' under study.

As Spradley contends, this has to do with learning from people rather than teaching them what the research holds (1980, 3). By ethnography research method, one can describe and explain the regularities and variations in social behavior, which are one of the goals of this study. In addition, through ethnography method one can document the existence of alternative realities and describe these realities in their own terms (Ibid., 14).

Unstructured and Semi-Structured Interviewing

According to Bernard Russell, unstructured interviewing is the most widely used method of data collection. He points out that in this method of research data collection, the researcher interview people informally during the course of an ordinary day of participant observation (1995, 208). As Bernard Russell notes, unstructured interviews are based on a clear plan that the research keep constantly in mind but is also characterized by a minimum of control over the informant's responses. The idea here is to get people to open up and let them express themselves in their own terms and their own pace. In this regard, a lot of what is called ethnographic research is unstructured (Ibid., 209).

On the other hand, semi-structured was used in situations where the researcher would not get more than one chance to interview an informant. According to Bernard, this method of data collection has much of the unrestrictive quality of unstructured interviewing and requires all the same skills, but semi-structured interviewing is based on the use of an interview guide. In this case, the interview guide is a written list of questions and topics that need to be covered in a particular order and is attached under the appendix of this thesis.

Participant Observation

In participant observation researcher participates in observing the activities as he or she collects data and then compiles data through interaction with the subjects in the context of their everyday lives (Mugenda and Mugenda1999, 155). Just like Spradley suggests, the participant observer (researcher in this case) engaged in introspection as he participated in activities done by the actors (1980, 57) and constantly kept ethnographic records of the observations. In view of this, the

researcher managed to observe two processions at the Likoni chief's camp and watched two football matches among the Digo youths.

Rationale for Selection of the Research Method

According to Mugenda and Mugenda, qualitative method of research is beneficial in contrast to the quantitative method as it allows the research to go beyond the statistical results of quantitative research. He believes that human behavior is best explained and examined using qualitative research (1999, 155 - 156). Creswell also advocates for the choice of the qualitative research method as opposed to the quantitative method if the nature of the research attempts to describe what is going on in a situation. In this regard, this research method is appropriate for this research because it will deal with studying or examining people's worldview (1998, 17).

Role of the Researcher

According to Creswell, Qualitative research is undertaken in a natural setting. This requires the researcher to be in this setting to collect data. In this case the researcher gets a great opportunity to collect data with minimal bias (1998, 120). As Creswell adds, "the researcher can gather words or pictures and analyze them inductively, focusing on the insider's meanings (*emic* perspective) to describe a process that is expressive and persuasive in language" (Ibid., 14). In order to gain a smooth entry into the research field the researcher must purpose to build good relationship with informants so as to participate in the activities under study (Ibid., 110). This can begin with a particular group of people who are united to each other by a specific social interest.

Population

The population under study in this research is the Digo people in Likoni – Mombasa, which is located right from the mainland side of Mombasa town along the Lunga-Lunga road, toward the south all along the Indian Ocean. According to Bethanyeng (article on line) and noted earlier in this study, the Digo are Bantu tribes and are actually grouped together with eight other tribes. As hinted in the *Operations Outreach* (journal on line) it is rather surprising to find that in a country that is generally considered a Christian nation, the Digo, who are approximately two hundred and twenty five thousand, are more than ninety five percent Muslim.

Sample

As pointed out in the introduction of this study, the sample of the study will be the Digo people who live in Likoni – Mombasa. Based on Creswell's argument, the method of sampling that will be adopted is that which allows the researcher to analyze the problem being studied in an understanding manner (1998, 110). The selecting of the members, subculture, or unit to be used as sample for studies relies on the researchers own judgment based on their research questions. They select samples based on the opportunities they get or establish criteria for selecting individuals to be studied (Ibid., 120).

In this regard, this research shall adopt an opportunistic method of sampling.

According to Spradley:

The criteria for choosing the sample in determining the selection of sample when using ethnographic research method is looking at the simplicity as opposed to complexity of a social situation, determining how accessible to the researcher the social situation is, the level of unobtrusiveness, the availability of permission to be involved as a participant and the frequency of recurring activities (1980, 45-51).

Social Situation

In doing participant observation, a researcher needs to locate a place from which one will observe the actors doing some sort of activities. In this regard, the researcher visited and observed Digo village elders, judicial processions at chiefs' camp among others to see how they handle issues such as disputes, a sport activity, naming ceremonies, weddings, family meetings, social dances and burials among others. According to Spradley, where possible, the researcher then becomes involved with the actors in what they are doing as long as it does not compromise the Christian faith (1980, 40). In the case of the researcher, participating in sports activities as well as sharing meals with the Digos was done in several occasions.

Informants and Respondents

Informants are a source of information. In Spradley's view, they literally become teachers for the researcher. According to Spradley, the term informant is not to be confused with concepts like subject, respondent, friend or actors. He states, "In social science, investigators are not primarily interested in discovering the cultural knowledge of the subjects; they seek to confirm or disprove a specific hypothesis by studying the subjects' responses" (1979, 29).

Respondents are persons who respond to a survey questionnaire or to queries presented by a researcher. Whereas the questions asked to a respondent originate from social scientist's culture, the questions asked to the informant arise from the informant's culture (Spradley 1979, 31). Strictly speaking, respondents are objects of observation in a natural setting. These can become informants only when the researcher both listens to and watches them.

Data

In this research the researcher identified key informants as he proceeded with the study. Such informants include Digo elders, Islamic leaders, pastors and missionaries to the Digo people in Likoni - Mombasa. According to Spradley, good informants are those that have undergone thorough enculturation, are currently involved in the activity under study, are from a culture different from that of the researcher, can avail much time for purposes of the study and are relatively non-analytical (1979, 45).

Collection of Data

As stated in Mugenda and Mugenda's book, qualitative research data can be collected through direct observation of behavior in the particular setting being studied (1999, 155) or written materials, photographs and recorded audios, which describe events and occurrences (Ibid., 203). On the other hand, Creswell adds that data can be acquired by participant observation, interviewing and by obtaining documents from the sites or informants/ respondents (1998, 14).

Data Recording

The data collected is usually recorded in a report that gives a descriptive account of the situation under study. As noted earlier in this study, the researcher primarily used ethnographic interviews, participant observation as well as both unstructured and semi-structured interview methods of data collection. Whenever required, messages given at interviews were recorded precisely. This made the reports from the field research rich, real and very informative (Ibid., 206).

Based on Spradley's design for ethnographic research, the researcher kept a journal, which contained a record of experiences ideas, mistakes, confusions, and

problems that have arisen during fieldwork. This included different reactions to informants and the feelings of the researcher. An ethnographic record that is adopted in this study comprises of field notes, pictures and artifacts which document the cultural scene under study (1979, 69).

Data Analysis Procedure

Analysis of data involves the detection of various categories in the data, which are distinct from each other. For Mugenda and Mugenda qualitative analysis involves both collecting and analyzing data (1999, 203). To accomplish this, the researcher adopted the taxonomic analysis as specified by Spradley. According to Spradley, "...taxonomy is a set of categories organized on the basis of a single semantic relationship" (1980, 112). He further notes that this method shows more of the relationship among the things inside the cultural domain (Ibid.).

The researcher was able to analyse the data obtained through participant observation and ethnographic interviews following the proposed steps of Creswell (2003, 191-195). His steps involve the following:

- Organize and prepare the data for analysis.
- Read through the data.
- Begin detailed analysis with a coding process.
- Use the coding process to generate a description of the setting or people as well as categories or themes for analysis.
- Advance how the description and themes will be presented in the qualitative narrative.
- A final step in data analysis involves making an interpretation or meaning of the data.

The above methodology together with Spradley's Developmental Research Sequence (D.R.S) has been adopted and aimed at answering research questions one and two from a Digo (*emic*) perspective while Research question three has been answered from the (*etic*) perspective which has to do with a Christian response to the Digo decision-making process.

Validation and Verification of the Data

For the purpose of validation and verification of the data, the researcher has taken the final report or specific descriptions to the informants and the respondents who would determine whether the report is accurate (Creswell 2003, 196).

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS:

ANALYSIS OF DATA AND INTERPRETATION OF THE FINDINGS

This chapter deals with the reports on the findings of the process of decision-making among the Digo Muslims as influenced by their social systems and kinship patterns. The report is based on the author's personal interviews and observation of the Digo people at Likoni – Mombasa.

In regard to data analysis, Creswell argues that the process of data analysis involves developing a logical idea out of text and image data which has to do with using open-ended data for the most part (2003, 190). He continues to state that “this requires asking general questions and developing an analysis from the information supplied by participants” (Ibid.). As suggested earlier in the proposal, the researcher, indeed, went and lived among the Digo Muslims in Likoni – Mombasa over the December holiday in order to collect this data.

Within this time, the present author was able to interview fifteen informants living in different parts of Likoni and three different groups of people were also interviewed through open-ended interviews. At the same time moderate participant observation was adopted as directed in Spradley's book on ethnographic interview (1980, 60). The data was then analyzed following the methodology of Creswell (2003, 191-195). In analyzing the collected data, the present author adopted the taxonomic analysis as specified by Spradley (1980, 112).

Digo Social Systems and how they Influence Decision-Making in the Community

Among those interviewed, it was generally agreed that decisions are mainly made by recognized elders (*wazee wanaotambulikana*) among the Digos. Though the Digo community basically finds its identity in matrilineal lineage, the elders play a fundamental role in solving conflicts. The change in lineage system has greatly been influenced by the Islamic resurgence among the Digos. Bakari and Kafani concurred that these elders (*wazee*) are normally elected by the community through or by the assistance of the area chief.

Elected Elders' Task in Making Decisions

According to *Adeanet* (article on line) the modes of decision-making in African culture employed dialogue and consensus. Although this activity was not open to all members of the community, (usually only adult males) it nonetheless coincides with the dialogical nature of teaching for critical reflective thought. Although the *baraza* (the community council) is not specifically an educational institution, the fact that dialogue and consensus were the norm there allows for a chance to bridge from one context to the other.

The Role of the Uncles in Decision-Making Process

In cases where the issue relates to the extended family, uncles from the mothers lineage (*wajomba*) are involved. According to my informants these uncles are very powerful people in the decision-making process. Mbwisho narrated that it is them (uncles) who decide whether one is to marry from a particular family or not.

Both Kafani and Mwaude agree that the powers of the elders in the Digo community have been weakened by the introduction of the local central government

policies. Today in Digoland, the assistant chiefs and chiefs seem to have taken most of the responsibilities that have ever been undertaken by the elders (*wazee wa mtaa*). He went on to note that the number of elders these days varies from one area to another. In Likoni for instance, there are nine elders who work together as a team. They directly report to the area chiefs and assistant chiefs. Mwaude continues to argue that it is these elders who help in solving petty cases such as family disagreements, gossip accusations among others. They only forward or refer cases to the high authorities when resolutions have not been found. Serious issues like land disputes, robberies, divorce and the like, the elders forward the case to the assistant chief who takes it to the chief.

In connection to this, the researcher managed to observe several processions at the Likoni chiefs' camp. It was discovered that the chief at Likoni involves the same elders in deciding or solving disputes. The decision that is arrived at in these meetings is taken to be final. In cases where solutions are not appreciated by the differing parties, those implicated are referred to the court of law and from there the dispute is conducted conventionally.

Impact Decision-Making Based on the Digo Kinship Patterns

In family matters the Digo people find their identity in the matrilineal lineage. For this reason the mother's line is taken seriously (especially the uncles) among the Digo people. One interviewee said that even a dead man's name during burial ceremony was called by his mother's name. Amazingly, Kafani as a Digo Muslim felt that uncles were more respected than aunts. He suggests that this is so because in the Digo community women's brains are equated with those of little children and so the man is the final authority since they have better brains.

Decisions Pegged on the Digo Matrilineal Lineage

A number of informants concurred that one belongs to his mother but not his father. In other words it is only the mother who has a concrete evidence and information about who is really his or her son. From the observation of the researcher, this belief seems to be necessitated by the high rate of divorce and re-marriage among the Digo Muslims. As *Mzee* Bakari narrates, the logic behind this argument is that the mother has more attachment to the child than the father and so she is the only one who can be fully trusted. Commenting on this idea, *Mwalimu* Mbwisho (kaya elder) held that most Digos prefer the Matrimonial lineage as opposed to the paternal lineage one which is more Islamic and secular-based because they feel that the former has more assurance. Bakari Yusuf summarized this by stating, “The mother’s side is more accurate”.

Mwalimu Mwaude, one of those interviewed, contends that on issues related to deciding ones future spouse, the Digo people have adopted some aspects from the secular and western way of life. This is evidenced by the fact that the spouses find each other before informing the rest of the family about their intention. Nevertheless, *Mwalimu* Kafani hints that the parents or guardians from the mother’s lineage still bear the final authority. He argues that it is them who determine whether the marriage will go on or not. According to Kafani there are a number of reasons as to why the parents or guardians may choose to stop marriage plans. For instance, in some case they may not appreciate the character or behavior of the others family due to some historical implications that relate it to witchcraft, evil jinn, evil eye and so forth. In case the spouses decide to marry without seeking the blessings of the parents, their marriage is taken to be a cursed one (*laana*). They are induced into trauma as the

whole community ignores or segregates them. This separation is considered serious as it counterbraces the *ummah* spirit, which Islam has impacted Digos already.

Decisions Based on Inheritance Policies

In regard to inheritance, the majority of the informants agree that among the Digo people property should be handled by the *Wajomba* (mother's brother). According to Fatima Bakari in case of a husband's death, the wife (or wives) acquires a third of his property. She continued to say that since most Digo women are not married, due to divorce rate among the Digo, women these days have the right to own property by themselves. They are, thus, allowed to allocate their possessions in accordance to their wish.

Commenting on this issue Zainabu informs the researcher that the uncles still have the right to come in case a dispute arises. For her most disputes result when there is partiality in the division or distribution of property. In deciding the way forward Fatima Bakari insists that the wish of the original owner of the property is respected. It was at this point that the researcher discovered that if some one rejected the suggestion of the uncles (*wajomba*) he or she would be declared an outcast. According to Kafani, to be declared an outcast is a very awkward thing because one is sidelined by the whole community, an experience that causes lots of psychological and physical torture.

Decisions Based On Digo Beliefs and Practices

The process of decision making is also based on the Digo belief and practices. These include their belief in spirits, angels and jinn, divination, evil eye and witchcraft practices. For instance, it was generally revealed that that many Muslims

do visit doctors for treatment though it is not legitimately allowed in the Qur'an and Hadith. A number of informants insisted that majority of witchdoctors are liars whose sole concern is to acquire wealth. I was made to understand that a good number of Muslims don't want to be associated with visiting the witchdoctor though it is done anyway.

Belief in spirits, angels and jinn

Principally, Islam differentiates, like the Bible, between angels who are considered good and evil spirits. Similar to the Islamic teachings, the jinn are another kind of beings supposedly originally created from fire (Nehls and Walter 1997, 31). From the data collected, it is clear that in most cases troubles among the Digo people are brought about by fear of the spirits. According to Mwaude and Mwana-Juma (informants) spirits (*jinn*) cause most of the troubles (*mateso*) that frustrate the Digo community and cause them to make particular decisions. Such decision may even cause them to consult with witchdoctors to help them out. In an attempt to illustrate this frustration, Mwaude shared a recent story of problems that are believed to have been caused by *jinn*. He recounted that many lives were claimed because a borehole was dug at Likoni without prior consultation of the *jinn*. In order to save the situation, the elders had to come together and administer *tambiko* (special sacrifice) for the spirits lest many lives be claimed. Mwaude strongly believes that the *jinn* must play a crucial role in every aspect of *Mdigo's* life and must be consulted before undertaking any serious decision. For Mwana-Juma the *jinn* need to be involved even in deciding a marriage partner, any serious purchase of property and so forth.

Divination

Like any other human being Muslims also want to know what the future holds for them. As Nehls observe, divination is among the occult practice among many Muslims. They continue to hint that it is used to discover what the future holds for them (1997, 31). Mbuvi and Kioko after being amongst the Digo Muslims for over ten years attests that among the Digo people divination is used to in determining the future partner, the sex of an unborn child or to find out about a business proposition, or to select the right medicine for treatment. Though this is in contrast to the Islamic teachings of predestination, the Digo Muslims assume that “pre-knowledge of events may avert negative or false decisions” (Nehls 1997, 31).

The evil eye

Concerning the concept of the ‘evil eye’ (*kijicho baya*), Mzee Bakari and Musk agree that it is another cause of genuine fear among many Islamic communities. According to Musk “the fundamental concept of the ‘evil eye’ is that precious persons or things are constantly vulnerable to hurt or destruction caused by other people’s envy” (1989, 33).

Witchcraft

In Bakari’s view, the belief that jinn are all over affirms that witchcraft is a reality. He adds that those who indulge in the jinn dealings, the bad jinn for that matter, end up being witches. Abdi-Aziz argued that in Islam witches are also believed to have the power to inject strange bodies into a victim, causing illness and even death. This relates to Musk’s argument that the witches’ “most feared activity is

the killing of their victims, sucking their blood, eating their flesh, or stealing of their soul” (1989, 33)

Normally, Bad or black magic (*uchawi* in Swahili) is always harmful. It is used by a wizard or witches as it “discovers secrets in order to avenge injuries, provides poison and dangerous charms and medicines, which can, and often do madden or slay their victim, and produces an atmosphere of mutual fear and hatred among inhabitants of a village...”(Love 2000, 31). From my interview I discovered that folk Muslims, at least in Likoni area, understand witches, sorcerers or the jinn employ bad or black magic to attack their enemies.

According to Abdi-Aziz, those who visit witchdoctors do it in secret. This is similar to what Paul Hiebert, Shaw and Tienou observe, that witchcraft and sorcery are among the greatest fears people have as these beliefs have taken their toll literally in blood (1999, 149). In solving this problem, the witchdoctor’s first treatment has to do with revealing the witch. Kafani believes that this is crucial as it helps in revealing which kind of drug to administer since different witches have different powers depending on the kinds of jinn they have. It should be remembered that this process takes quite a while, some times a whole day. Though different informants give varied stories of the procedures that the witchdoctor follows in discovering the witch, the majority held the view that he (the witchdoctor) lies down on his back at full length and a heavy grinding-stone is placed in his or her chest and pounded with a pestle by fellow practitioner (Evans-Pritchard 1937, 189).

A number of informants agree that it is always expected that the witch should be an enemy of the victim and so all the names of supposed enemies must be mentioned leaving none. According to Mumejuma Salimu the witchdoctor must follow a line of investigation properly through interviewing his client. All that the

witchdoctor has to do is to suggest one of the mentioned persons who should be the existent enemy to satisfy his client. Once this is accomplished, the witchdoctor decides which drug is suitable for the situation and administers it by asking the client to swallow or sometimes through piercing the skin. Ali adds that many witchdoctors prefer giving their clients charms as protective device against more attacks.

Interpretations

From this examination, it has been revealed that decision-making process among the Digo people has been greatly influenced by the Islamic teachings. As a matter of fact the *ummah* (community) concept, piloted by elected elders, has greatly impacted the decision-making process among the Digo Muslims. As noted in the “*Reaching Muslims Today*” a great number of Muslims come from former colonies. They may be very sensitive to racism or paternalistic attitudes. For this reason they look upon Christians as westerners and so with suspicion and hostility, which can be aggravated by fear, ignorance, illiteracy and politics (1976, 10). In essence, Digo identity patterns differ throughout sharply with western thinking and Islamic doctrines. The only way to sort this out is to study their culture and contextualize their beliefs.

It is generally assumed among the Digo people that to be a real Digo is to be a Muslim. Consequent to this slogan, Digo people claim to be fully guided by the Qur’an and Islamic teachings when it comes to decision making. For the church to reach the Digo people with the gospel message there is need to have a clear understanding of this belief.

From this study it has also been revealed that decision-making among the Digo Muslims is greatly influenced by their social systems and kinship patterns which

have now been integrated into Islamic teachings. This understanding is of paramount importance if any gospel impact is to be made to the Digo community. The researcher realized one of the reasons as to why there is no breakthrough in reaching the Digos is because most missionaries never take time to understand their worldview in decision-making process.

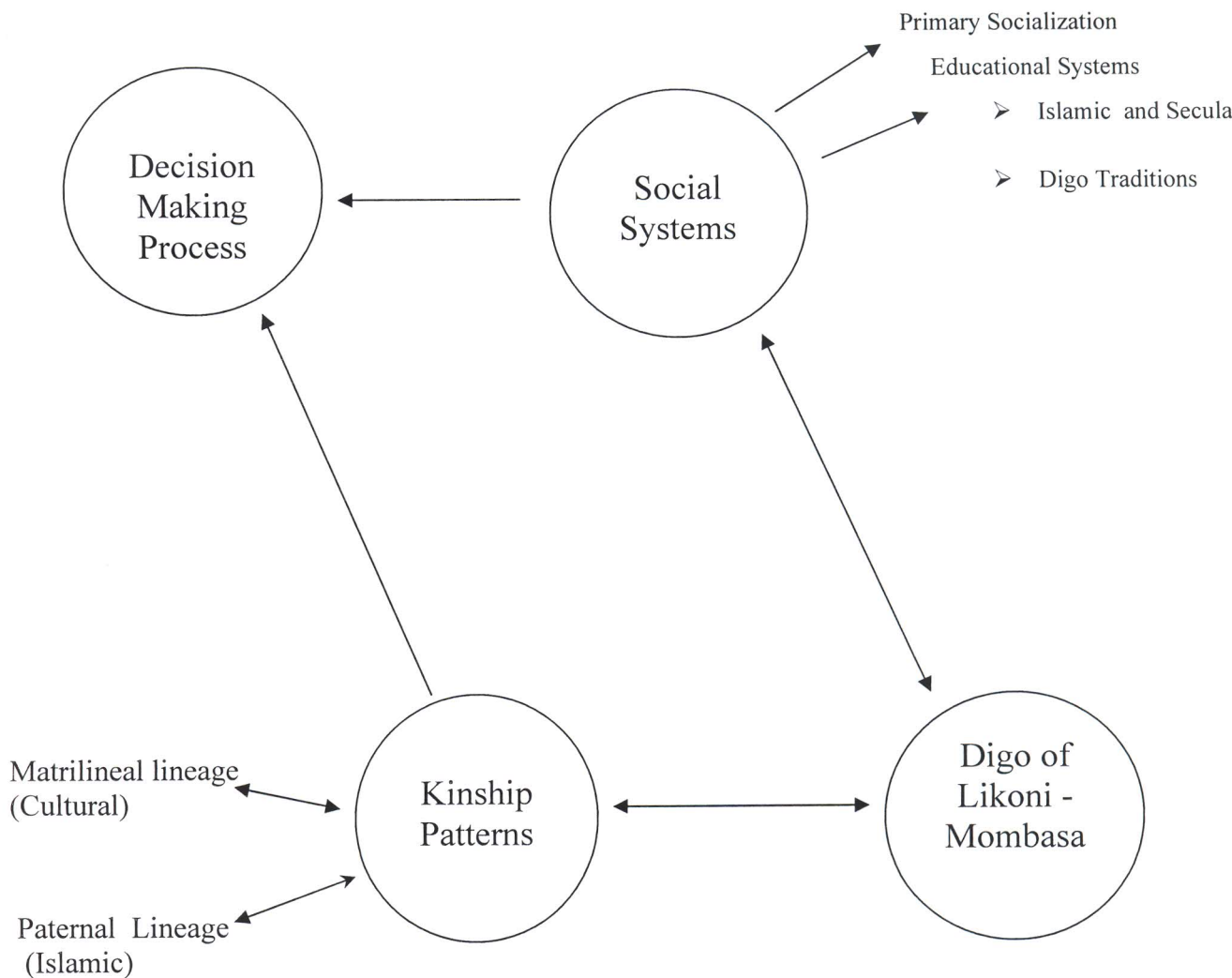
From this study it is clear that the whole idea of *ummah* is central in the Digo process of decision-making. This explains why the Digo people have come up with elected elders (*wazee wa mtaa/ mji/ kaya*) who work together to see to it that decisions are made rightly, based on Digo customs and Islamic requirements, in times of conflict. The first pillar of the Islamic organizational structure, then, is the principle that no community of Muslims, large or small, should be without *ul al-amr* or a decision-making body.

On the other hand, decisions among Digo people are determined by their social patterns a great deal. According to Mwalimu Mawioo of Ng'ombeni secondary school, most Digos take one meal a day. From the author's observation, the one meal that Mawioo talks of should actually be considered a snack by an outsider. Due to this, mostly the health of many Digos is wanting. As a matter of fact this has affected their performance and production at their places of work, academic progress among other faculties of social life. The fact that most Digos take one meal a day has made them weak and so doing hard work is quite difficult for them. According to Mawioo, the Digos live a very desperate life. Most of them find it difficult to find enough food to sustain their lives. For this very reason, they find themselves skipping some meals. This explains why most Digos are poor economically. No wonder most business enterprises at Likoni – Mombasa are owned by people who come from outside the Digo community.

The majority of the informants agreed that the Qur'an is believed to be a very powerful tool in the process of exorcising witchcraft. As Ali reported at one time the prophet Mohammad was seriously bewitched by a woman. Allah sent him some verses and so, Mohammad was rescued after reciting them. Ali continued to affirm that there are specific verses in the Qur'an that once recited; the spirits or jinn responsible for witchcraft goes way, though sometimes it

Figure: 1 Showing relationship between the three variables

NB: The three variables are: social systems, kinship patterns and decision making process. The arrows signify how each variable relate to the other.



CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter consists of a recapitulation of the earlier chapters and recommendations. This includes a concise summary of the findings, conclusions and discussions of the implications for such findings and recommendations that will include suggestions for further research.

There is no easy way to win Digo Muslims for Christ. No man or woman called to permanent work among them should presume to attempt such work without learning the language of the people he is trying to reach. Marsh points out that the Muslims fail to understand that a Christian can speak in tongues and yet be incapable of learning their dialect or language (1975, 94)

Having learned and understood the Digo culture (which includes learning their language, *Chidigo*) dialogue can be employed to reach them. In reality dialogue has come up strongly from these discussions that it is vital for any meaningful perception. According to Jumba Gilbert, most negative feelings or resentments between Christians and Muslims come about as a result of misinformation (2004, 43). He further suggests that in order to have headway, there is need to create forums whereby Muslims and Christians can talk as friends while clarifying truth claims in their respective faiths as it is indeed dialogue that enhances tolerance and trust (Ibid.). This comes through practical interpersonal interactions and interfaith meetings. The researcher concurs with Jumba that interfaith dialogue emanation from genuine friendship is therefore the most peaceful way of explaining ones position and clarifying truth to each other. Since decision-making among the Digo people is

influenced by matrilineal kinship patterns, then the *Mjomba* (maternal uncle) is a key person in the process of dialogue. At the same time, the elected elders should not be left out.

The most important point to keep in mind is that Muslims respond to community (ummah concept). By all means, Muslims must feel that we Christians really care, love and have a genuine concern for them as human beings. It has been revealed that most Digo live a desperate life. This aspect can be used to show acts of love and compassion to them by sharing possessions with them. According to Marsh, for us Christians to make an impact in the Islamic patterns of thinking which influences their decision-making, we must try to forget that they are Muslims and remember that they are human beings like us (1975, 10). He goes ahead to state that, “In nearly every case of conversion of a Muslim, he has first been influenced by Christian love” (Ibid., 12). This is where Christians have failed especially from the time of the crusades till now.

It is important to show love in practical ways and through this we shall gradually break down the barriers that would otherwise restrict dialogue. As for Marsh, simple actions such as greeting them with a smile, showing sympathy in times of illness or bereavement, rendering little acts of service, inviting them and willing to accept their invitation, being scrupulously honest in all business dealings and others show genuine love to the Muslims (Ibid., 13).

We must depend wholly on the power of the Holy Spirit to help Muslims to counteract divination powers and make deliberate decision for Christ. As the Bible affirms, it is him who brings conviction of sin and faith in Christ, creates new life and gives assurance of peace (John 16: 8 – 14 [NIV]). It is of paramount importance to

use the scriptural truths as this is the final authority that we have and Muslims have reverence for it.

There is need to carry out further study to find out the place of women in decision-making among the Digo people. Among the Digos, women seem to be acquiring different status besides what they have been before. In this regard, for instance, the author discovered these days a woman has the right to divorce her husband as long as she has given him three legal declarations to do the same. With the improvisation of Information Technology (intranet and mobile phones/ SMS), divorce has been activated. Following this, the divorce rate among the Digos is on the higher rate.

Moreover, there is need to find out how decision-making among the Digo Muslims is being affected by education. Nowadays, the Digo community is facing the challenge of secular education as well as the Islamic teaching. This means that the traditional African Digo culture is fading away every other day. It is a real challenge for the Digo community to integrate the two intruding educational systems. Understanding how the Digos are dealing with this challenge is crucial as it will help in developing appropriate and relevant strategies to reach them both socially, psychologically and missiologically.

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APPENDIX

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS GUIDE

NAME

MARITAL STATUS

AGE

DATE

SOCIAL SYSTEMS

1. What time do you wake up?
2. What times do you take your daily meals?
3. When do you go to work?
4. How many times do you pray per day?
5. What are the most common issues that bring conflicts in the among the Digo people?
6. Do you belief in the existence of jinn?
7. How do you deal with problem related to witchcraft?
8. What procedures to you follow in administering justice?
9. How do you solve conflicts or controversial issues in the community?

KINSHIP PATTERNS

1. Are you married?
2. How did you meet your spouse?
3. How often do you differ with your spouse?
4. Who in the family has the final authority when it comes to decision-making?
5. Tell me something about the Digo heritage procedures
6. In case somebody (close relative for this matter) dies, when and how do you burry them?
7. Are there some decisions that need to be made before contacting the burial ceremony?
8. How do Digo people inherit and pass on property and wealthy?