

AFRICA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

AN INVESTIGATION OF THE IMPACT OF LUO TRADITIONAL VIEW ON  
THE CONTEMPORARY LUO-MUSLIM CONCEPTUALIZATION OF  
DEATH IN KENDU BAY, KENYA

BY:  
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of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy  
in Inter-religious Studies

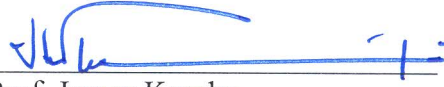


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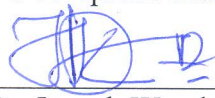
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## Abstract

This study has attempted to investigate the impact of the Luo traditional view on the Luo Muslims conceptualization of death in Kendu Bay. The study consists of eight chapters. In the introductory Chapter one, a discovery is made on how the triple religions (Christianity, Islam and ATR) have interacted with each other in Africa. A specific reference touching on the origin and the spread of the Luos from their homeland in South Sudan to Kenya and in Kendu Bay in particular has been made. The contact of the Luos in Kendu Bay with Islam has also been shown. In Chapter Two, a review has been made on the existing literature. The center of focus is on how different communities view death and the practices accompanying it. This review has been done with the view of seeing how different communities that have become Muslims in Africa cope with the changes. A special reference in the study of the Luos has been made in the light of the event of death of S.M. Otieno that occurred in 1986.

In Chapter Three, data was collected from a group of sixty-five Luo Muslims residing in the town of Kendu Bay. Ethnographic research method was used. Data was analyzed using Kim's Synthetic Triangular Approach, STA. From this approach, a theoretical approach that provides a description of Luo traditional elements in Luo-Muslim perception of death was developed. Chapters Four to Eight address the findings of the research. Chapter Four explains how Islamic teachings have influenced the Luo-Muslim traditional view of death. These teachings are centered on the meanings and causes that Luo Muslims ascribe to death, and the rituals that they follow right from the time somebody dies to the time of burial and after. The Chapter has also sought to explain the outcome that Islamic teachings bring on the Luo-Muslim view of death. In Chapter Five, it has been argued that despite the influence of Islam, the elements of Luo tradition in the Luo-Muslim perception of death are still evident. In looking at these Luo traditional elements, the Luo-Muslim funeral was first divided into three stages: initial, middle and later stage. The three domains that emerged from those three stages are the total, partial and non-Islamic domains. In each stage also, similarities and differences between Islamic and Luo traditional elements have been described.

Chapter Six analyzes the effects of Luo traditional elements on Luo-Muslim understanding of death and its related practices. These influences were approached in each stage of the Luo-Muslim funeral. In each stage also, the elements of continuity and discontinuity of the Luo-Muslim view of death and its related rituals were analyzed. Chapter Seven discusses the synthetic nature of Luo-Muslim conceptualization of death in Kendu Bay. This chapter has been divided into two. In the first part, the religio-cultural characteristics and themes underlying Luo-Muslim views of death have been described. The second part highlights the Luo-Muslim conceptualization of death as reflected in the funerals of the Luo Muslims. Chapter Eight gives a summary of the findings, and recommendations. In general, the Finding Chapters reveal two fundamental truths about the Luo Muslims in Kendu Bay. First, the Luo Muslims have kept due diligence to their past Luo traditional funeral practices. The Findings have also revealed that the Islam that Luo Muslim practice is contextual.