

NAIROBI EVANGELICAL GRADUATE
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

A MISSIOLOGICAL STUDY OF THE PHENOMENON
OF SPIRIT POSSESSION AMONG THE MUNYOYAYA
WOMEN IN THE MADOGO LOCATION, TANA RIVER
DISTRICT IN KENYA: A Response to I.M. Lewis'
Theory of Deprivation

BY
JUDY WANJIRU WANG'OMBE

A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate School in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of
Theology in Mission

JULY, 2007

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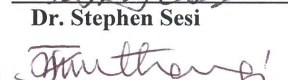
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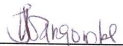
Student Declaration

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AMONG THE MUNYOYAYA WOMEN IN THE MADOGO LOCATION,
TANARIVER DISTRICT IN KENYA: A RESPONSE TO I. M.
LEWIS' THEORY OF DEPRIVATION

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 or the Examiners

(Signed)



Judy Wangjiru Wang'ombe

July, 2007

ABSTRACT

The Munyoyaya women are part of the larger Munyoyaya people group who inhabit the Tana River district in Kenya. They are a minority tribal group considered to be part of the Oromo language group. They are predominantly Muslims yet steeped in folk tendencies that are prohibited by orthodox Islam. This study attempts to examine one aspect of these folk tendencies as practiced by the Munyoyaya women. It seeks to understand their participation in the spirit possession cults in the Madogo location. It also evaluates I. M. Lewis' theory of deprivation in relation to the context of the Munyoyaya women's participation. The study also aims at examining some missiological ways of cross-cultural Christian witness among the Munyoyaya women.

This study is based on the cognitive anthropological perspective that is focused on the implicit aspects of a culture. Thus to describe the implicit aspects of the Munyoyaya women's cultural practice in the possession phenomenon, ethnographic research design is employed as a tradition of qualitative research. Data is collected using participant observation and ethnographic interviews with those involved in the possession sessions.

The findings of this study reveal that the Munyoyaya women are majority of the participants of the possession cults. They participate for various reasons that include: economical, therapeutical, social, their pragmatic nature, spiritual and psychological factors. These factors, especially the spiritual and psychological factors, stem from the worldview of the Munyoyaya people that is basically supernaturalistically oriented. This provides a comprehensive outlook to possession cults that disprove Lewis' deprivation theory. He generally bases his theory on socio-economical factors that attempt to explain participation in possession cults.

In view of the findings recommendations are made that aim at effective cross-cultural Christian witness among the Munyoyaya women and Muslims in general. There is need for worldview studies that will aim at understanding the outward behaviors and implicit assumptions of people to be reached with the Gospel. It is also recommended that Muslims as people be distinguished from the ideological aspect of Islam. Lack of such a distinction has accounted for the much of the frustration experienced in Islamic mission fields.

TO

Harun my *dirsi*, for his great love for the Muslim people

Abraham Baraka and Miriam Nuru, our children

And to all those who labor faithfully among the Muslim people;
The Lord sees your labor of love

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am grateful to God for strength, health and all that he has provided for the accomplishment of this thesis. I am indebted to the following people who have offered their help in immeasurable ways that I am extremely grateful for:

1. Harun, my husband and friend, for “burning the candle” with me to ensure thoroughness, and for helping me to brainstorm the issues contained in this work.
2. Abraham Baraka and Miriam Nuru, our children, for bearing with mother’s absence in trying to finish this work.
3. Rev. Francis Omondi, international director of The Sheepfold Ministries, for introducing me to the Muslims.
4. Dr. Caleb Kim, my mentor, advisor, and supervisor, for broadening my understanding of the concept of worldview, among other things; and for believing in me. I am very grateful for all his great support and encouragement throughout my studies. God bless you.
5. Dr. Stephen Sesi, my second reader, for all insights gained even apart from this work; and Mrs. Josephine Sesi, for being our mother in the department.
6. Dr. Henry Mutua and Dr. Alemayehu Mekonnen, lecturers in the Missions department, for all their efforts in making me more knowledgeable in missiological concepts relevant for the mission field.
7. My classmates, Pauline Murumba, Robin Mulunda and Peter Mweu, for their encouragement throughout my studies.

8. My good neighbor Moses Siboi and family, for kindly lending me their laptop so that I could finish this work.
9. David Kimeu, for all the assistance and additional information on the Munyoyaya people.
10. Mrs. Dolores Wood, for reading through this work and encouraging me.
11. My parents, Mr. and Mrs. Amon Nduati, and my mother-in-law, for their understanding and support in all ways.
12. My siblings, Anton Kimani, David Kahura, Alice Nyambura and Susan Gathoni, for all their visits to NEGST to encourage me.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This study is about the Munyoyaya women and their participation in the phenomenon of spirit possession. The Munyoyaya are considered as one of the unreached people groups of Kenya since there is no viable church in their midst. The Munyoyaya people are predominantly Muslims. They live along the River Tana in Tana River District of Coast province in Kenya. They are also referred to as *Munyo* or *Korokoro*. They are Cushitic and are considered as one of the Oromo speaking groups (Stroomer 1995, 2-3). They are also a minority group and little is known about them. Hence it is expedient to give their background herein.

Background Information of the Munyoyaya People

It would be appropriate to consider briefly the language background from which the Munyoyaya come from as it will be reflected in some cultural practices that seem to be common. Their historical background is also given as well as their population and settlement.

Language Background of the Munyoyaya People

The Oromo language belongs to one of the six main branches of the Afro-asiatic language family that includes Berber, Semitic, Egyptian, Chadic, Omotic and Cushitic. The Oromo language falls under the Cushitic group as a major language spoken in southern Ethiopia. Many of the Oromo speakers in Kenya are found in both

Eastern and North Eastern Provinces, as well as in the Tana River district of Coast Province (Stroomer 1995, 2). The Oromo groups of Kenya include: Gabra, Boraana, Sakuye, Garre, Ajuraan, Orma, Munyoyaya and Waata (ibid.). People from these language groups are able to communicate with each other in spite of slight differences in the dialects.

Historical Background of the Munyoyaya People

The origin of the Munyoyaya people is said to date back to the sixteenth century in Ethiopia. While various versions are given concerning their origin, all consent that their ancestors came from Ethiopia and traveled southwards into Kenya. Inter-marriage of the founding father of the Munyoyaya people with a woman from another tribe in the Eastern province of Kenya called the Tharaka saw the beginning of the Munyoyaya tribe. This couple is said to have settled there but later moved away to stay along the River Tana. They practiced farming along the river. Years later, there arose one renowned leader of the Munyoyaya people called Boru Roba. He is said to have been a diviner as he foresaw the coming of a “flying canoe” that had “wings” (that is, an airplane). He is also believed to have been a rainmaker.

Population and Location of the Munyoyaya people

A project by Daystar University reports that the population of the Munyoyaya people is about 15,000 (KUPNet 1995, 37). This is obviously an outdated estimation in light of their relatively high birth rate. In the Madogo division, an estimate of 27,000 Munyoyaya people would be more valid as given by the administrative divisional officer. The Madogo division is comprised of four locations: namely, Mororo, Sala, Saka, and Madogo locations. The Madogo location is the research area

of this study where half of the overall population is estimated to be the Munyoyaya people. The rest of the inhabitants of the Madogo location include: Orma, Malakote, Waata, Somali and Borana people.

Background of the Research

This study explores the participation of the Munyoyaya women in the spirit possession cults in the Madogo location of the Tana River district. It also seeks to evaluate the deprivation theory as propounded by I. M. Lewis. This keen interest in the Munyoyaya people stems from an ardent desire to understand the Munyoyaya women in a better way that will facilitate effective Christian outreach to them.

This researcher has stayed for several months with the Munyoyaya people in the Tana River district. There she served as a missionary with an indigenous mission organization called The Sheepfold Ministries. Previous Islamic studies did not prepare this researcher for what she encountered among the people. The Munyoyaya indulge in traditional practices that are termed as syncretistic by their orthodox Islamic leaders. In particular, the fear of malevolent spirits is rampant, where all possible precautions are taken. These include charms and amulets worn by both the young and the old. Drum beats are familiar sounds that pierce the nights in Munyoyaya villages in attempting to address the issue of spirits. Previous interactions by this researcher with the Munyoyaya women witnessed their frustrations of not being able to fully curb the recurring effects of these otherworldly beings. Yet this researcher was not able to offer much assistance to the women apart from telling them that “Jesus heals”. She would also condemn their ritual practices only as “animistic” and “devilish” and thus tried to persuade them to stop. This however made the task of sharing the gospel among the Munyoyaya women rather formidable and complicated. She was more

concerned with the orthodox tenets of their region and not with what ailed the people as felt needs. This research thus has attempted to remedy this situation for the sake of more effective outreach to the Munyoyaya women.

This researcher’s passionate longing to understand the Munyoyaya women in a deeper way took her on a journey of discovering what other way can be used to get to the heart of the Munyoyaya women. This is in a bid to pave the way to sharing the Gospel of Christ with them. Enrolment at the Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology (NEGST) in the Missions department brought her into contact with many educative concepts on reaching the Muslims. Of great interest was the concept of worldview that brought the realization of a veneer of deeper assumptions and beliefs that is covered by the behavioral surface practices which the Munyoyaya and Muslims generally display. Hence this researcher was challenged to go beyond the previous perspective of merely looking at the outward behavioral practices into the deeper level assumptions to try and discover what really makes the Munyoyaya women behave the way they do. This was thus an attempt to try and put into practice what was learnt for the betterment of outreach to the Muslims.

Problem Statement

The concern of this study is to examine the phenomenon of spirit possession among the Munyoyaya women in the Madogo location of the Tana River district in Kenya and to evaluate I. M. Lewis’ theory of deprivation from a cognitive anthropological perspective.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative study is threefold:

1. The study seeks to understand the phenomenon of spirit possession and how the Munyoyaya women of the Madogo location participate in it.
2. The study attempts to explore missiological ways that are appropriate for Christian outreach to the Munyoyaya women using the understanding gained above.
3. The study also seeks to evaluate I.M Lewis' theory of deprivation within the context of the Munyoyaya women's participation in the spirit possession cults.

Significance of the Study

It has been mentioned that the Munyoyaya people are a minority people group whose story has not been documented apart from some recent attempts. This study is thus significant in providing some information about the Munyoyaya people that will be useful for anyone interested in knowing them more. This study is also vital and relevant today in contributing to the realm of Islamic studies as well as to the ministerial dimension of reaching the Muslim women in Africa. This study is basically an ethnographic study that first aims at gaining a deeper understanding of the Munyoyaya women as they participate in the ritual of spirit possession. Many have tended to do their Islamic studies by focusing on the tenets of orthodox Islam as presumably practiced by Muslims worldwide. This study however deviates from this conventional approach and seeks instead to focus on the Muslim people themselves, not on their formal religion. This was significantly borrowed from Kim (2001), who studied the Swahili Muslims in Eastern Africa apart from their religion. This distinguishes Muslims as people from Islam as a religious ideology. This is deemed to

be of great significance since it concentrates on the folk aspect of Islam as practiced by the majority of Muslims. Essentially the folk dimension of Islam seeks to answer the existential questions that arise in the daily lives of the Muslim people. Spirit possession is a major part of this folk dimension among Muslims and specifically among the Munyoyaya women. Thus in studying the phenomenon and the women's involvement in it, this researcher is able to gain a better understanding of the women's worldview and some of their existential quests. This is deemed significant in that it paves the way for appropriate methods of sharing the Gospel of Christ in a way that meets various spiritual needs deeply felt by them.

The outcome of this study is not only significant to this researcher, but to the missionary fraternity that seeks to share the Gospel of Christ to the Munyoyaya people as well as to other Muslim people in general. It has been mentioned above how this study seeks to deviate from the conventional way of approaching Muslims from their orthodox dimension. This study is to serve as a model that can be emulated by other missionaries or anyone interested in understanding the Muslim people.

Additionally, this study is significant in the anthropological realms as it responds to I. M. Lewis' theory of deprivation. This theory has influenced many writers who study the phenomenon of spirit possession. It has however come under close scrutiny by other anthropologists who have not been satisfied by the interpretation it gives. This researcher was also interested in finding out how this theory would apply in the Munyoyaya women's context and not just depend on what other researchers have come up with. Thus responding to the theory was included as part of the threefold purposes of this current research. This study therefore, joins the ranks of evaluating it and thus contributes to shedding light on the issue of women's deprivation theory as propounded by Lewis.

Research Questions

The following research questions have been posited in order to investigate the participation of the Munyoyaya women in the spirit possession cults as well as to evaluate the deprivation theory as suggested by Lewis:

1. How would the spirit possession cults among the Munyoyaya women be described?
 - i. What are the different types of possessive spirits?
 - ii. How can the cult sessions be described?
2. What are the factors that contribute to the Munyoyaya women's participation in the possession cults?
 - i. What are the societal roles and status of the Munyoyaya women?
 - ii. What are the reasons for attending the possession cults?
3. How does the phenomenon of spirit possession among the Munyoyaya women relate to Lewis' theory of deprivation?
 - i. What are the similarities and differences between the phenomenon of possession in the Munyoyaya context and the context surrounding Lewis' theory?
 - ii. What can be anthropological responses to Lewis' theory in light of the Munyoyaya women's experiences?
4. What are the contributions of the above findings to the cross-cultural communication of the Gospel of Christ among the Munyoyaya women?

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study are:

1. To gain a deeper understanding of the worldview of the Munyoyaya women by describing their participation in the spirit possession cults.
2. To find the factors that contribute to the participation of the Munyoyaya women in the spirit possession cults.
3. To examine how the phenomenon of spirit possession among the Munyoyaya women would relate to I. M. Lewis' theory of deprivation.
4. To provide information that can advise those involved in the cross-cultural ministry among Munyoyaya women.

Limitations

This researcher's inability to speak the Munyoyaya language has been a setback to a large extent. Even though many of the people interviewed can communicate well in Kiswahili as the national language in Kenya, they usually do not adequately express some aspects of the rituals in it. Collection of data has also been limited in the sense that this researcher worked in an Islamic village where the free communication with the opposite sex is not allowed. Being a woman therefore, this researcher was not able to indulge in lengthy discussions with the Munyoyaya men in order to get further information. Time was also another significant limiting factor. Any ethnographic study requires adequate time as Creswell notes (2002, 481). This may even stretch to more than one full year of collecting data. This researcher was not able to stay for more than four months at the field of study due to unavoidable circumstances.

Delimitations

The Munyoyaya people are found in four different locations that make up the Madogo division. This study has been confined to only one of the four locations, namely the Madogo location. It also focused on the Munyoyaya women, not men, even though men have also been interviewed, especially those who usually participate in the cults as practitioners or even participants.

This study intends to gain a deeper understanding of the Munyoyaya women in Madogo location. This has been narrowed down to specifically consider their involvement in the spirit possession cults as part of the religio-cultural aspect of life that is supernaturalistically oriented. Otherwise, the folk dimension of the Munyoyaya women would be too diverse and cover many aspects of their daily life.

Responding to Lewis' theory of deprivation is another intention of this study. This theory is concerned with the socio-political dimension of participants of the spirit possession cults as well as their economic situation. This study does not attempt to go into the details of the economic situation of the Munyoyaya women that would have necessitated a more comprehensive quantitative survey.

Assumptions

This study worked under the premise that all the Munyoyaya people are supernaturalistically oriented. They believe in spirit beings that inhabit their world. The Munyoyaya people thus are assumed to relate with and interact with these spirits on a daily basis. To them possession by spirits is a reality unlike some perspectives that view possessions as a case of mental disorder.

Operational Definitions

1. Possession

The term "possession" is used in various contexts. In Christian circles, it means ownership as Dickason explains (1987, 38). This study uses the term "possession" to refer to the physiological and psychological state when a spirit occupies and controls a person's body and mind. Spirits mostly tend to control people's speech and body movements. This study also prefers to use the term "possession" instead of "embodiment", which is a term that a number of anthropologists employ.

2. Spirits

Spirits are supernatural beings that affect people (in this case Muslims) in life, hence are considered as "this-worldly". They are also trans-empirical as they are beyond scientific observation and analysis as Musk explains (1989, 175).

3. Muslims

Muslims are the people who adhere to the religion of Islam. This study will consider two types of Muslims, the "orthodox" and the "folk" Muslims. Orthodox Muslims are those who strictly follow the tenets of the Islamic religion. Chapman describes these as the adherents of the "purer" kind of Islam that is usually the one described in the books hence the ideal one (2003, 129). Folk Islam, on the other hand, is practiced by the majority of Muslims and involves some belief and practices that are deemed to be inconsistent with the tenets of the orthodox Islam. This is also referred to as the "popular" Islam (ibid.). However, both the folk and orthodox aspects can be observed in one and the same Muslim person in most cases.

4. Religion

The term “religion” in this paper will follow Kraft’s definition that perceives religion as a subsystem of culture along with social, economics, language, technology subsystems, and so forth (1996, 49). Kraft allows a “rigorous distinction between religion and worldview” (Ibid., 199), where religion is part of the surface level of any culture while worldview consists of the deep level assumptions, values and allegiances that make people behave as they do.

5. Cult

The term “cult” is used in this study to refer to a gathering of people who participate in the activities that are involved in the spirit possession events.

6. Deprivation

Deprivation is herein used to refer to the condition of lack either economically or socially. Economically, this means that the people involved do not have enough financial assets to fulfill their daily requirements. Social deprivation refers to the situation where high social positions and status are withheld from concerned people.

7. Beating the drum

The phrase “beating the drum” (*kupiga ngoma*) is a Munyoyaya cultural idiom used to refer to the possession sessions held to recognize the *ayaana* possessive spirits. These sessions involve beating a drum (*dibe* or *ngoma*) in a rhythmic way in order to appease the spirits



CHAPTER TWO LITERATURE REVIEW

The intention of this chapter is to examine the substantive and methodological literature available and accessible that relates to the topic of this research. Since the Munyoyaya people’s story has not been documented, this section thus does not contain any reference to literature about them.

Substantive Literature

This section will review the literature available that addresses the topic under study. The approach taken herein is that of first considering a broad view of issues related to the topic under study and then narrowing the focus to the issue of possession. The concept of worldview is crucial in understanding a cultural group, hence it is deemed important to review what scholars have written about it. The concern of this study is to examine the phenomenon of spirit possession among the Munyoyaya women in the Madogo location. In light of this, substantive literature review will include a section of the broader topic of what folk Islam entails since the phenomenon of spirit possession falls under this. A review of what scholars say about Islam in Eastern Africa will be given in order to place the Munyoyaya Muslim women in a wider context that paves the way for a clearer understanding. Literature addressing the issue of spirit possession will be reviewed and especially in finding out how different authors have responded to Lewis’ theory of deprivation.

Understanding Worldviews

The term “worldview” was derived from the German word *Weltanschauung*, and was used to explain some cultural aspects (Naugle 2002, 4). The concept of worldview has become a popular concern for a number of anthropologists including Charles Kraft, Paul Hiebert, David Burnett, Michael Kearney, and others. Worldview studies in anthropology can be considered to have begun as a theoretical approach with Robert Redfield in the 1940’s and 1950’s. He focused on folk societies as Marantz mentions (1993, 32). Kraft’s contributions to anthropology are of particular importance for this research because his interest is in cognitive anthropology, which is also the perspective that is taken in this research.

Kraft defines worldview as the “totality of the culturally structured images and assumptions (including values and commitment of allegiance assumptions) in terms of which a people both perceive and respond to reality” (2000, 1-1). Kraft’s definition closely resembles Kearney’s definition. The latter asserts that worldview is the “cognitive background that influences the perception of alternatives and choices made” by people (1984, 35). Thus for both Kraft and Kearney, worldview is the way people look at reality and respond to it according to their cultural assumptions and images that they acquire as children through the process of enculturation. These worldview assumptions are therefore “deeply imbedded in the structure of the culture” as Kraft acknowledges (2000, 1-3). They are considered to be the deep level of culture that basically dictates how people will behave in a particular cultural setting. This illumines the fact that culture consist of two levels: the surface and the deep levels as Kraft also suggests (ibid., 1-2). These two levels are very dependent of each other since people can not behave as they do without having a set of values, assumptions and allegiances. Thus the customs and cultural behavior exhibited by a

cultural group are the “behavioral acting out of these unconsciously accepted and agreed upon presuppositions” according to Kraft (1996, 55). These presuppositions are the assumptions that make up the worldview of a people and hence a basic understanding of the worldview of any particular group that is to be considered as crucial.

Characteristics of Worldview

Kraft (1996, 55-58) gives a list of some of the characteristics of worldviews that are notable.

1. Worldview assumptions, values and commitments are considered to be true by any given cultural setting. This is because they are learnt by the people as children who largely accept them without requiring any proof of authenticity even as adults.
2. The worldview of a particular people provides them with the “lens” through which they perceive and interpret life, and what goes on around them.
3. A people’s worldview is an organized system with several sublevels and is not questioned until some assumptions or values are “challenged by experiences that people cannot interpret from within that framework” (ibid., 56).
4. Differences in worldviews arise when different societies or cultural settings contact each other. These differences are not easy to deal with. Kraft mentions that this is the case when attempting to communicate Christianity on a cross-cultural basis. The Gospel is meant to change people at their deepest possible level of culture, and that is at their worldview level.

5. Worldview and people always function together, even though Kraft introduces the thought that it is people who behave or act while worldview (or culture) just “sits” like the “script of a drama” (2000, 1-2).

Worldview and Christian Witness

Burnett asserts that any Christian transformation of a culture involves changing the worldview themes of that particular culture (2002, 228). When key worldview themes are changed, the repercussions can be felt in the rest of the cultural behavior of the people. Burnett illustrates this point by giving an example of a key worldview theme- the nature of God. Many tribal societies have had a notion of a distant and unconcerned God, who created the world and left it and thus was not concerned with the people and their daily life. Burnett shows how this notion is changed when a particular people come to know of a loving God, who is their concerned Father. This affects their social attitude as men, for instance, get to love their wives as God loves them (Burnett 2002, 229).

Kraft further endorses this fact that the Gospel is meant to change people personally as well as structurally. This structural change involves change at the worldview level, which is the deepest possible level of any culture. This will fundamentally result in deep changes in the worldview assumptions that consequently result in changed behavior (Kraft 2000, 1-9). Thus for any person interested in sharing the Gospel of Christ with Muslims, this concept of worldview change is crucial. The worldview assumptions of Muslims in any area need to be changed as they become committed Christians. Any Muslim who makes commitment to Christ should not only exhibit behavioral change like ceasing his/her pilgrimage to Mecca, for example. There should also be a decisive change in many aspects in his/her deep level of

culture (that is, at the worldview level) that will resonate to a change in behavior. Hence conversion will not only imply change in religion, but a change in assumptions, allegiance and values. Yet as Kraft explains, these are only changed when there is pressure from within the society, but which is stimulated from outside. The “inside implementors” (Kraft 1996, 400) feel some dissatisfaction with their cultural traditional assumptions and allegiances, thus opt for change. These are also stimulated by an outside influence, which in this case is the Christian influence (Kraft 2000, 18-4). For this influence to be effective, the appropriate principles of communication have to be adhered to. This paper will not delve into the details of the complex process of communication; however, suffice it to mention some key aspects that are related to the worldview concept.

Worldview and the Process of Communication

For any communication to be effected, three elements must be present: the communicator, the receiver, and the message. These three elements are also involved in communicating the Gospel of Christ to any given people. There is the communicator of the Gospel, the receiver of the Gospel, and the Gospel message itself. Essentially, each of these aspects involves a worldview of its own: the communicator’s worldview, the receiver’s worldview, and the worldview as found in the scriptures. Kraft asserts that the differences displayed by each of these worldviews presents one of the greatest hurdles to intercultural communication (1978, 94). It becomes crucial thus, to understand each of these worldviews for anyone seeking to communicate the Gospel of Christ. The communicator will understand the Gospel message according to his/her own worldview assumptions and values, while the recipients of this message would understand it with respect to their own worldview

assumptions and values. The Scriptures were also written from a particular worldview context and thus to understand the message in an appropriate way, there is need for an exegetical process that will discover the original meaning that was intended for the first readers; this meaning is then applied in a hermeneutical way for the contemporary readers. All this makes it expedient to know the different worldviews involved in the communication process of sharing the Gospel message. The communicator ought to know his/her own worldview in order to avoid any prejudiced interferences while communicating with someone from another worldview context (Kraft 1978, 104). The communicator also has another vital task of understanding the recipient's worldview as much as possible. This entails entering the community as learners and making the study of the particular culture a central concern, as Hiebert advises (1985, 93). Any communicator of the Gospel to Muslims is faced with this task of entering an Islamic society as a learner.

Chapman quotes Roger Hooker who advises that if we are to make any progress in dialogue with Muslims we must first of all get inside their world and meet them on "their own territory where they are most at home, and, perhaps, most truly themselves" (Chapman 2003, 19). Meeting Muslims where they are entails seeking to appreciate their worldview by listening keenly and observing what they do without having ethnocentric thoughts by the communicator. Hence the concern of this research is attempting to understand and appreciate the worldview of the Munyoyaya women by looking at their participation in the spirit possession cults. This is the folk aspect of Islam that has been described as different from the orthodox Islam. The following section thus describes folk Islam as it is generally perceived by scholars.

Folk Islam

Chapman draws attention to the terminology problem existing in the expression *folk Islam*. He thus puts this in italics as a way of showing the uncertainty in the definition of the term (2003, 131). This problem will not be dealt with in this research. This section seeks to highlight the nature of folk religions before considering how folk Islam differs from orthodox Islam.

The Nature of Folk Religions

Hiebert, Shaw and Tienou (1999) use the terms "folk" and "popular" interchangeably to refer to the kind of religious beliefs and practices of the common people. Hence the aspect of popularity is evident in the nature of folk religions. Folk religions are perceived to be belief systems in the same way that formal religions and sciences are considered as belief systems. Each of these belief systems seeks to answer questions. The questions asked and answered by each belief system are essentially different as Hiebert, Shaw and Tienou explain (1999, 40).

Folk religions are more concerned with the existential issues of daily life and are less concerned with the ultimate realities that tend to be the major concern of formal religions (ibid., 77). Hiebert, Shaw and Tienou further give the four main questions that underlie folk religions (1999). These are:

1. How do people find meaning of life on earth and how do they explain death?
2. How do people try to get a good life, and how do they deal with misfortune?
3. How do people seek to discern the unknown in order to plan their lives?
4. How do people maintain a moral order, and how do they deal with disorder and sin?

Apart from answering the existential questions above, folk religions regard rituals with great significance. Som`e highlights the crucial role of rituals when he asserts that rituals provide the “focus and energy that hold the community together, and provides that kind of healing that the community most needs to survive” (1998, 24).

Folk Islam is a component of folk religions and thus essentially has the nature outlined above. It is basically what majority of Muslims adhere to as they seek for a belief system that will answer their existential questions of daily life. The four main questions mentioned above are a main concern for folk Muslims as they struggle with how to manage life. This makes them have various beliefs and practices that are deemed to be syncretistic by their orthodox counterparts. There exists thus a tension between folk orthodox Islam as outlined below.

Folk Islam and Tension with Orthodox Islam

Musk (1979, 173) posits that the realities of the daily life of ordinary Muslims are rarely noticed by the Western missionaries to Muslims. These are the realities of the “other side” of Islam or, what Musk (1989) refers to as the “unseen face of Islam”. They are the realities of Islam beyond the five pillars or any orthodox expressions in Islam. The teachings that orthodox Islam propagates for its adherents are given new meaning in folk Islam. Parshall (1980, 81) and Musk (1979) tabulates these differences between orthodox and folk Islam as shown below:

Table 1. Differences in meanings of Islamic duties in orthodox and folk Islam (Adapted from Parshall, Phil. 1980. *New Paths in Muslim Evangelism*. Pp 81).

A. Duties (*din*) –Pillars

Form	Meaning in Orthodox Islam	Meaning in Folk Islam
1. Confession	Proof of being a Muslim	Creed used in a magical way to drive away evil

2. Prayer ritual (ablution)	Bodily purity for worship	Demonic pollution is removed by physical washing
3. Alms-giving	Responsibility to fellow Muslim	Precaution against the evil eye based on jealousy
4. Fasting	Sign of commitment and obedience to Allah and Islam	Ritual performed to compel God to protect from evil, disease, etc.
5. Pilgrimage	Visit the epicenter for Islam	Rituals involved also intended to ask God for protection

Table 2. Differences in meanings of Islamic beliefs in orthodox and folk Islam (Adapted from Musk, 1979 Pp.182).

B. Beliefs (*Iman*)

Form	Meaning in Orthodox Islam	Meaning in Folk Islam
1. Belief in one God	Monotheistic confession in Islam	Beliefs in God revolve on magical use of the names of God
2. Belief in angels	Servants of God to do his bidding	Includes also spirits and jinn
3. Belief in God’s books	God’s revelations found therein	Qur’an is used as fetish
4. Belief in God’s apostles	Instruments of God’s revelations	Apostles can deal with the spirit world affecting Muslims
5. Belief in Last Day	Focus of man’s life	Relates to death and spirit-life
6. Belief in predestination (<i>Qadar</i>).	Ultimately, everything is in God’s hands	“The prophet’s month” (the 8th month of Muslim calendar, is the holy night when God determines the fate of man for the coming month)

From the above tables, it is evident that there exists a tension between orthodox and folk Islam. The same forms of the Islamic beliefs and practices are given different meanings in both orthodox and folk Islam. Some Muslims regard the practices performed in folk Islam as inconsistent with the Islamic teachings since they compromise with paganism (Chapman 2003, 131). Love similarly mentions that

orthodox Muslims consider folk Islam as idolatrous (2000, 2). However, Chapman notes that there are some Muslims who see no fundamental difference or conflict between the orthodox and folk Islam (2003, 131). Kim also consents to this issue that many of the Muslims are not able to distinguish between orthodox and folk aspects of Islam. This is largely because of a belief that both the ideologies and folk traditions have been sanctioned by Allah (Kim 2001, 76). Kim further alludes to the fuzziness in the boundaries between orthodox and folk Islam, since “all Muslims do indeed practice both ‘official’ and ‘popular’ (or ‘folk’) Islam” (ibid., 77). Further, Islam has tended to include both orthodox and folk elements right from inception (ibid.). This will be seen vividly in the next section that shows how the folk aspects of Islam infiltrated into the religion.

Why Folk Islam?

In spite of the fuzzy boundary between folk and orthodox Islam as noted above by Kim (2001), Love insists that there is a marked difference in the two when he asserts that more than three-fourths of the world’s one billion Muslims are folk adherents (2000, 2). Whatever the case may be, one vital thing that stands out is that Islam has much of the folk aspects to reckon with. This makes it expedient to try and unravel the reasons for the proliferation of folk Islam and why it appeals to a vast majority of Muslims. Three issues discussed herein deal with the transcendental nature of Allah, the inclusion of folk aspects in the Islamic traditions, and the continuity with aspects of primal religions.

1. Transcendental nature of Allah

Tawhid (the oneness of Allah) is one of the most fundamental beliefs in Islam. This implies that Muslims recognize Allah as the sole creator, sustainer and source of guidance. He is also the source of power and authority and thus commands worship and obedience from man (Chapman 2003, 78). Allah, the Arabic name of God, is invoked countless times everyday by Muslims. This includes during the five times of daily prayers, and as they recite the 99 most beautiful names of Allah using the *tasbeih*, a kind of rosary with a hundred beads. Some of these names are: Allah- the Merciful (found 169 times in the Qur’an), the Compassionate, the Protector (found only once in the Qur’an), the Creator, the Provider (found only once), the All-seeing, and others. With references to the attributes of Allah as the Merciful, Ibn- Hazm, an Islamic theologian, is quoted as saying:

While the Quran uses the name Allah, which means “the most merciful of those who show mercy”, this cannot mean that he is merciful in the way we understand the word, for Allah is evidently not merciful. He tortures his children with all manners of sicknesses, warfare and sorrow. What then does the Quran mean? Simply that “merciful” is one of Allah’s names. A name that is not in any way descriptive of Allah or man to throw light on his nature. We must use it because the Quran uses it, but not pretend to understand what is meant by it. (By Ibn- Hazm as quoted by Nehls and Eric 1996, 95).

This quote by Ibn- Hazm may shed some light on the nature of Allah. In spite of the 99 beautiful attributes (names) of Allah, he is not perceived to be what he is attributed for. Al- Masih buttresses this fact when he quotes Al- Ghazali, the Islamic theologian who said that the contradiction, evident in the 99 most beautiful names, could imply that “Allah is everything and nothing” (Al- Masih n.d, 13).

Kim illustrates how the doctrine of *tawhid* (oneness) seldom addresses the daily practical life of man. Instead, it emphasizes the fact that God did not reveal himself in person, but he revealed his will. Thus God is “absolutely transcendent in

Islam” (Kim 2001, 97-98). His transcendency is shown in the way he is believed to dwell in another realm far from that of human beings. This is illustrated in the diagram below.

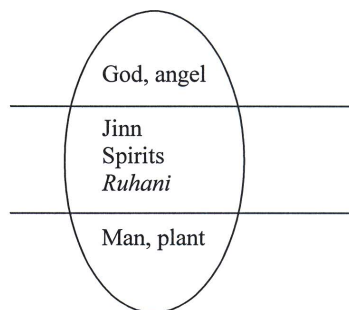


Fig. 1. Transcendence of God in Islam.

Figure 1 indicates how God in Islam is distant from man. He dwells in another realm that is beyond man’s reach. Closer to man are the spirits that are part of the daily life of people even though they are not of the same nature as man. This makes Muslims feel a sense of spiritual frustration, as Kim observes about such supernaturalistically oriented societies as the Islamic ones (2001, 97). The search for spiritual experiences as well as the inadequacy to deal with spiritual beings proves futile as Muslims find Allah to be distant. This sense of spiritual frustration makes Muslims turn to other spiritual beings for help (ibid.). This seems to be the premise by which Sufism was founded as they sought to get rid of “institutional shackles,

hypocrisy, and rigid rules” (Parshall 1980, 149). To Sufis, God is thought of as a “close friend” and not a distant ruler (ibid., 150). A sense of insecurity also gripped the ordinary Muslims who still retained the thought that God cannot be considered as a close friend or one who is involved with their daily lives. They then turn to other spiritual beings and powers, and thus the making of folk Islam.

2. Supernaturalism in the Islamic tradition

The two foundational Islamic traditions, the Qur’an and the Hadith, have also contributed to the proliferation of the folk dimension of Islam. The two Islamic sources are replete with references to the supernatural beings and powers as discussed below.

The Qur’an mentions many folk aspects that include references to supernatural beings and powers. A whole chapter (Surah 72) in the Qur’an is called *al-jinn* (the jinn), the name given to spirit beings in orthodox Islam. Surah 67:5 mentions that Allah made some lamps in the heaven that function like “missiles to drive away the *Shayatin* (devils)”. Reference is also made of stars that are used to guard against the devil (*Shaitan*) in Surah 15:16-18, and 37:6-7. Samuel M. Zwemer (1867-1952) translated the noun for “companion” (Surah 50:23) as *qarina*. He understood the *qarin* or *qarina* as someone’s “double”, or his “familiar demon” or “mate” (Greenway 2002, 91-92, also Musk 1989, 227).

The Qur’an mentions jinn in several places. The origin of jinn is noted when Allah said, “And the jinn, we created aforetime from the smokeless flame of fire” (Surah 15:27, also 55:15). Surah 6:100 also notes that it is Allah who created the jinn. There are some jinn that listened to the Qur’an being read, they believed and became Muslims (Surah 72:1). There are, however, other jinn that are evil and cause men to

be inclined to sin (Surah 72:6). Such jinn are said to be unbelievers (non- Muslims) and they shall be punished in hell (Surah 72:15). Surah 11:119 mentions that Allah will fill hell with jinn and men together. Jinn and devils (*shayatin*) were subjected to Solomon (Suleiman) to control them, according to Surah 38:37. Jinn were to serve Solomon as shown in Surah 27: 39 also.

The translation of *Ath-thaqalan* Surah 55:31 has been rendered by Yusuf Ali as “both worlds” of the jinn and man thus indicating the dual nature of this-world that includes jinn and man together. For this reason, Kim explains that Muslims believe strongly in the existence of the spirit world that relates to the human world (2001, 106)

Apart from the above references of jinn in the Qur’an there are other supernatural or folk aspects mentioned therein. Musk (1989, 227) points to the concept of dead prophets as receivers of blessings as shown in Surah 33:56: “Allah sends His Salat on the Prophet and also His Angels. O you who believe! Send your Salat on him and greet him with the Islamic way of greeting.” Folk religions have special places and times that are considered sacred, thus held with reverence. Such places and times are what Love (2000) refers to as “power places” and “power times”. The Qur’an refers to a “land which we have blessed for the ‘Alamin” (Surah 21:71). This land seems to refer to Jerusalem where God took Muhammad at night to show him the *ayat* (signs) (Surah 17:1). Regarding time, Surah 97:3 mentions of the “night of *Qadar*” as being “better than a thousand months”. In this night, angels and the *Ruh* (Jibril) descended down to man by God’s permission (Surah 97:4).

Musk (1989, 234-5) explains that the Hadiths expound more fully the aspects of folk Islamic belief and practices that are only vaguely mentioned in the Qur’an. Al-Bukhari and Muslim collections especially elaborate on the nature of the spirit world

in Islam. Below is a table showing some of the folk aspects addressed in Al-Bukhari’s hadith.

Table 3. Al-Bukhari’s contribution to folk Islamic thought
(Adapted from Musk 1989, 236)

Subject	Reference
Satan’s tying of knots	Vol. 2, Book 21
Kissing the black stone	Vol. 2, Book 26
<i>Laylat al- qadar</i> (night of power)	Vol. 3, Book 32
Angels, jinn	Vol. 4, Book 54
<i>Aqiqa</i> Sacrifice	Vol. 7, Book 66
Use of a <i>Sutra</i>	Vol. 1, Book 9
Incantations, evil omens, magic, soothsaying	Vol. 7, Book 71
Invocations	Vol. 8, Book 75
Dreams	Vol. 9, Book 87
The ninety-nine names of God	Vol. 9, Book 93

From the table above, al-Bukhari’s collection of hadith indicate that various aspects of orthodox Islam contribute to the folk Islamic tendencies. His mention of such things as kissing of the black stone, reciting of the ninety-nine names of Allah, and so forth, are part of the orthodox Islam yet they are essentially folk tendencies that make up the worldview of folk Muslims. Al-Ashqar consents to this when he mentions various aspects involved in the “world of jinn and devils”. He mentions that the prophet Muhammad is reported in hadiths (Musnad Ahmad and Sunan Abu Dawud) as having said that donkeys are able to see jinn (al-Ashqar 1998, 13). A hadith in Sahih Muslim records Muhammad as having warned Muslims not to be the first and the last to enter market places. These are likely to be “sources of evil” (ibid., 25).

Muslim scholars have also tried to expound on the issue of the spirit world, which has thus contributed to enhance the folk beliefs and practices. The issue of jinn

is particularly referred to by scholars like al-Ashqar (1998) mentioned above. He mentions that jinn can possess people, what he refers to as the “touch of the jinn” (1998, 206). This possession can be the result of “desires, lust, passions and zealotness” (ibid., 204), or it can be as a result of a person trying to harm a jinn consciously or unconsciously (ibid., 205). Al-Ashqar suggests the following cures for jinn:

- Striking the jinn: The possessed person is hit and he/she will not be hurt since it is the jinn being hit (ibid., 207).
- *Dikr* and reciting the Qur'an against the jinn: This involves mentioning of Allah's name repeatedly as well as reciting the Qur'an especially the “verse of the throne” (al-Baqara 255).
- Incantations and invocations: In curing the possessed person, Al-Ashqar mentions that incantations that do not have any polytheistic connotations are allowed (ibid., 211). “Pleasing” the possessing jinn by performing animal sacrifices is not allowed as it is perceived to be an act of polytheism (ibid., 212).

Other Islamic leaders who consent that jinn possess people include Ibn Taimiya.

His collection, *Majnu al-fatawa*, cited by Al-Ashqar also shows how jinn possess people (ibid., 87). According to Musk (1989, 237), al-Ghazali, the revered orthodox theologian, is one of the scholars who brought forward the “burdens of popular Islam” in his emphasis for Sufism to be recognized by the orthodox authorities.

3. Continuity with pre-Islamic practices

Westerlund acknowledges how some pre-Islamic religious practices were adopted into Islam and how orthodox Muslims have tried to uproot them but in vain

(2006, 191-192). Some of those pre-Islamic practices that are considered as pagan include: making the pilgrimage to the *Kaaba* in Mecca, visiting the consecrated places, and other religious observances borrowed from Arabian customs (Abu'l Fida quoted by Zwemer in Greenway 2002, 71-72). Musk also attests to this fact that animistic practices prevalent in Arabia were continued when Muhammad founded Islam. These practices include the pilgrimage to the Kaaba, use of amulets for protection, using fingernails and hair trimmings for magic, using protective measures against the evil eye, *qarina* and jinn (Musk 1989, 229). Hence Muhammad's immediate followers carried on with such folk practices and ensured they passed them on to the subsequent generations. Yet the pre-Islamic folk expressions were not the only source of the folk dimension in Islam. Musk further posits that non-Arabs of other lands who embraced Islam also retained many of their previous traditions “beneath a veneer of conformity to orthodox Islam (ibid.). These include Africans who converted to Islam and yet carried some aspects of their tribal religion. The next section thus discusses at length how Islam was integrated in African communities.

Islam in Eastern Africa

A discussion of Islam in the whole of the continent of Africa would be appropriate in providing a wider overview of Islam in Africa. However, this section will deal with Islam in Eastern Africa as a wider perimeter of the target area of this research. It will consider how Islam penetrated into this region and how it encountered the traditional religions.

The Spread of Islam in Eastern Africa

Trimingham (1980, 53) records that Islam in the Eastern African region spread in two phases. The first period involved the contact of the Arab Muslims with the Coastal Bantu people. The former had arrived on the East African coast for commercial purposes and in the process they intermarried with the African Bantu people to form an African-Islamic regional culture. Trimingham asserts that this culture had roots and outlook on life that were non-African and that the Islam instituted was not indigenized (*ibid.*). However, Kim refutes this in his historical exploration of the identity of the Swahili people. He asserts that the “Swahili Islam and culture had their origin in an African civilization upon which Islam has been built” (2001, 46). The contact of the Swahili people with the Arab traders saw many of the former convert to Islam in the tenth and eleventh centuries. These were the African Muslims referred to as the Shirazi, whose origin was the Shungwaya civilization (*ibid.*, 47).

The second phase of the spread of Islam in Eastern Africa was its venture into the interior between 1880 and 1930 (Trimingham 1980, 53). Islam had existed for more than twelve centuries along the Eastern Africa Coast. It was not until the nineteenth century that it would spread inward from the Coast. Sperling explains that there was on-going contact between the coastal Muslims and the hinterland non-Muslims through trading, yet there was no conducive environment for the spread of Islam (2000, 276). What finally attracted more people to Islam was not the superiority of the message of the Qur’an. Stamer explains that there were purely sociological factors that saw the balance tip in Islam’s favor (2005, 1). To the traditional Africans Islam seemed to offer a framework that seemed to embrace their old traditional religion (*ibid.*).

Both the African religion and Islam appeared to have a similar outlook in that both encompassed the whole of man’s life and not just the spiritual aspects. This attracted Africans to Islam, who even saw it as a preferable way of life. The Eastern African people like their West African counterparts got attracted to Islam when they saw there were Islamic sources that complemented and supplemented the traditional ways of divination and other similar practices suitable for dealing with evil and preparing one for the life thereafter (Sanneh 1997, 30-31). Some of these Eastern African people were smaller tribal groups that embraced Islam because of contact with large tribes. Trimingham gives examples of tribal groups along the Coastal strip as well as in the North Eastern parts of Kenya who embraced Islam because of association with larger tribes like the Swahili and Somali Muslims (1980, 51). A specific example of how a tribal group in Eastern Africa (Kenya) embraced Islam is given below to reinforce the facts mentioned above about the spread of Islam.

Islamization of the Borana People in Kenya

Aguilar asserts that by 1952, 75% of the Waso Borana of Kenya were reported to be Muslims even though they integrated their traditional religion with Islam (1996, 56). These Kenyan Borana people recall with nostalgia their native homelands, Dirre and Liban in Ethiopia where God (*Waaka*) gave them their laws and customs as well as their traditional leader (*Qaallu*). Baxter records that these two Borana homelands were the centers of moral, ritual and legal issues (Baxter n.d, 238). The Waso Borana of Kenya however had to move away from these two homelands and thus were consequently separated from their Oromo traditional core. This isolation led to the decline in traditional allegiance and thus influenced their acceptance of Islam.

Another factor that enhanced the acceptance of Islam by these Borana people was their contact with the Somali people. Aguilar sees it more as a “Somalization” process than “Islamization” as the Borana adopted some of the Somali ways like dressing, hair styles, weapons, and so forth (1996, 57). After the Borana people were isolated from their cultural center they tended to seek for alternative ways. Their Somali neighbors seemed to be prospering more than them and yet the Somali people did not perform traditional ceremonies. Hence the Borana people interpreted this as implying that God loved the Somali and had forgotten the Borana. They therefore decided to embrace the Somali way of life and hence the notion of “Somalization”, which nevertheless included becoming Muslims (Baxter n.d, 247).

Islam seemed to be compatible with the Borana traditional religion. Some of the similarities include: fear of God, esteeming charity and justice, avoidance of evil, great value placed on ritual precision and emphasis on daily prayer. However, there were some Borana people who rejected Islam on the basis that it was against their traditional way of life. Specifically they reckoned that Islam denigrated the status of the *Qaallu* (traditional spiritual leader) as well as some crucial traditional ceremonies (ibid.).

Folk Islam among the Borana Muslims

Trimingham points out that the Borana (Galla) Muslims are:

Fringe Muslims in the sense that they remain pagan in outlook and customs. The cult of the sky-god Waq (Waaka) still survives, though weakening through their relative isolation from the religious leaders (qallu) in Ethiopian Borana and the influence of Islam (1980, 51).

Aguilar also consents to this fact of Borana Muslims still clinging to some of their traditional practices. He further notes that since the Islamic God “spoke” Arabic and not Borana they insisted on continuing with their divination practice. This at least

involved a Borana ritual specialist who would be a medium through which a spirit spoke in the Borana language (1996, 60). This can be a similar case to what Aguilar points to in the practice of *ayaana* cult among the Borana Muslims. He describes the cultic expressions which are associated with veneration and intercession of Sheikh Hussayn of Bale (Ethiopia), as well as possession by *ayaana* spirits (1996, 57). Sheikh Hussayn of Bale was one of the respected holy men and an Islamic teacher (Kapteijn 2000, 242). Borana Muslims go for pilgrimage to Bale in the month of February every year, as the anniversary of Sheikh Hussayn’s death (Trimingham 1965, 253). This reference to spirit possession among the Borana introduces the discussion of spirit possession among folk Muslims in general.

Spirit Possession among Folk Muslims

Mbiti admits that “African traditional ideas and practices have been mixed with those of Islam to suit the requirements of the people concerned” (1992, 188). African traditional belief in the spirit world is an example of what has been integrated into Islam. Kim affirms this in his discussion of how the spiritual life of the Waswahili people on the East African Coast integrates both Islamic and African traditional religion to form the Swahili Islam. In particular Kim reports that:

[The] therapeutic rituals of spirit possession, called in Swahili *ngoma ya kupunga majini/ mashetani*, is one of the most conspicuous cultural features that demonstrate clearly that Swahili Islam maintains alliance with traditional African worldviews along with the local system of Islamic faith (2001, 71).

Giles also contends to such a dualistic nature of the Swahili spirituality where she asserts that the Swahili possession cults are structured in a complex oppositional dichotomy between Islamic and traditional religious beliefs (1989, 109). Matory further illustrates how Islam and the traditional rituals of possession among the Oyo-

Yoruba people of Nigeria have intertwined and raised some conflicts in the wider context of society (1994, 495).

Spirits and possession rituals bear some semblance in many African societies as Boddy asserts. Yet in spite of the similarities, she further explains that there are significant differences in the possessive cults. These vary according to local beliefs as well as the social conditions (1989, 133). Below is a general description of various aspects of possession cults among different African communities that have been studied by scholars with different perspectives.

Classifying Possessive Spirits

Various scholars have classified possessive spirits in different ways. Mbiti divides spirits into two main categories: nature spirits and human spirits. Nature spirits are further subdivided into sky spirits and earth spirits. Human spirits consist of the living dead (recently dead ancestors) and ghosts (long dead ancestors) (Mbiti 1992, 70). Alan Tippet puts possessive spirits into five different categories: healing spirits that possesses shamans, divinatory spirits that speak through oracles, ancestral spirits, nature spirits, and evil spirits (as quoted by Hiebert, Shaw and Tienou 1999, 180). Trimmingham mentions four different categories of spirits: namely, ancestral spirits (*mazimu*), nature spirits (*genii loci*), possessive spirits (*pepo*), and Islamic spirits, which includes jinni (1980, 114). Sesi's classification of spirits among the Digo Muslims in Kenya closely resembles that of Trimmingham. Digo spirits are classified as: nature spirits (*mizuka*), ancestral spirits (*koma*), possessive spirits (*phepho*), and Islamic spirits (jinn) (Sesi 2003, 34-35). All these spirits essentially possess people apart from the nature spirits (*mizuka*), which are closer to God

(*Mlungu*) and are impersonal unlike the possessive spirits that have names and are more personal (ibid., 42).

Scholars who have attempted to carry out research on possessive spirits have encountered some confusion in classifying them. Giles mentions the conflict in using the terms *shetani* and *pepo* interchangeably. To her *pepo* can be spirits which possess people and can either be good or bad, while *shetani* is a "devil or demon", which refers to a bad spirit (Giles 1989, 64). Kim also attempts to explain how Swahili societies use different terms to refer to spirits. *Pepo* is a term used instead of jinn by Christians or pagans (adherents of African traditional beliefs) in Tanzania to refer to spirits. An Islamic shaman, reports Kim, however refutes this as ignorance of Christians who do not understand the spirit world. According to him *pepo* are not among God's creation while jinn are the appropriate Islamic term for spirits. The term *sheitani* is used interchangeably by the Waswahili especially when referring to jinn that are destructive (Kim 2001, 134-135). Kim further asserts that the Waswahili subdivide the Islamic jinn into good and bad jinn. Good jinn are called *maruhani* (sing. *ruhani*) and are "helpful, powerful and godly." These also differ from other spirits in that they descend from above when possessing a person, instead of climbing up to the head (ibid., 137-138).

Possession Phenomenon and Healing Rituals

The phenomenon of spirit possession and manifestation is explained differently in different cultures. This is because of the different underlying assumptions that govern the surface ritualistic practices of any given cultural group. However, reference to various scholars who have researched on this phenomenon reveals that there are some general similarities in spirit possession and manifestation.

In many cultures, illness or some body discomfort is usually the initial symptom that indicates that a person is possessed. Dahl contends that among the Borana people in northern Kenya, *ayaana* spirits manifest themselves by a number of symptoms such as “headaches, chest complaints or aching joints.” Such illnesses defy any modern medical services even after several attempts (Dahl 1989, 154). Boddy also affirms that stubborn symptoms of illness for instance persistent headaches, nausea, depression, anxiety and pains are possibly attributed to *zayran* spirits in northern Sudan (1989, 145).

Kim mentions of the pathogenic nature of all the spirits that possess people. Such malevolent spirits also cause misfortunes that are irresolvable by ordinary people. This therefore requires the intervention of one who is able to communicate with such spirits and ask them to stop their malevolent actions. Such a person is a shaman whose initiation into shamanism entails undergoing some sort of mystical disease (Kim 2001, 170-171). Hiebert, Shaw and Tienou consent to this by asserting that shamans get their calling after becoming sick when afflicted by a spirit (1999, 179). Essentially anthropologists agree that a shaman is a “master of spirits” as he is able to communicate with the spirits that cause disease and misfortunes in people (Lewis 1989, 45; Musk 1989, 100). This communication, posits Boddy, entails the shaman facilitating a contractual relationship that the sick person enters into with the malevolent spirit (1989, 143).

Hiebert, Shaw and Tienou classify the healing rituals performed to cure persons who have been afflicted by possessive spirits as “rites of crisis”. These are performed when crisis such as disease disrupt the normal social order; they are also not scheduled regularly (1999, 316-317). For some, such rituals are vital in restoring good health that the community needs in order to survive (Som`e 1998, 24). Such

therapeutic advantage of possession rituals are further acknowledged by Tapio Nisula whose book is reviewed by Kenyon. Nisula carried out research in Zanzibar town and other parts of the islands and observed that using quantitative data, there was a decline in the quest for biomedicine that was paralleled by an increase in popularity of therapeutic possession (Kenyon 2002, 786).

These rituals of healing are performed in specific traditional places specially prepared and revered as sacred by the people. Kim asserts that among the Waswahili people such a place is called *kilinge* and is perceived as a “sacred and spiritually powerful place” (2001, 208-209). Trimmingham calls such a place the “mystery hut” or *kilinge* as well (1980, 119). Larsen further adds that the *kilinge* is also called a “*hospitali*” (hospital) by the inhabitants of Zanzibar town (1995, 17). Digo Muslims in Kenya have traditional shrines where rituals are performed. The shrines for ancestral spirits (*koma*) are referred to as *mizimuni* and *mizukani*, while those for nature spirits are called *kaya* (Sesi 2003, 34).

Ritual Sessions

There seems to be a general concession among scholars on how the healing sessions are performed after the patient has been diagnosed as having been attacked by a possessive spirit. The shaman is able to tame or persuade the possessive spirit so that it can talk. Some shamans do this by entering into trance in order to communicate with the spirit, as Colleyn asserts (1999, 76). Boddy records that the shaman in Southern Sudan, who deals with the *zar* spirit, does not normally need to go into trance to communicate with the spirit (1989, 155). This difference concerning whether the shamans go into trance or not can be explained in terms of worldview differences.

Essentially, the shamans' role of controlling the spirits is of greater significance than whether they enter into trance or not.

The ritual session involves singing, clapping, dancing and sometimes drumming. Drumming may not be a main feature of possession rituals. Kim explains that drumming is more common among communities that still hold to African traditional beliefs and practices than those that are more inclined to Islamic practices. These latter prefer more Islamic forms like the Sufi *dhikr* or reading of the Qur'an during the healing rituals (Kim 2001, 211). Janzen illustrates this difference when he explains how the Nguni speakers of the southern parts of Africa perform possession sessions by singing and dancing as drumming continues. He further asserts that the purpose of drumming is to entice the spirit to speak up so that the healer (*isangoma*) can identify the spirit and know what it requires (Janzen 1991, 301). Identification of the particular possessive spirit is important so that the appropriate song for the spirit is sung; otherwise it will not speak up. Maranz refers to the *ndepp* ceremony performed by Senegambia Muslims to make the *rap* spirit identify itself (Maranz 1993, 73). Fumigation with various types of incense is an essential aspect of the healing ritual. Dahl mentions the usage of frankincense (*lubadin*) that is burnt in a special clay container. This incense is used to make the spirit happy especially after it has been identified. The patient is covered with a piece of cloth and inhales the *lubadin* smoke (1989, 157). Boddy also mentions that various types of fumigation are used especially if the *zar* spirit refuses to speak. There is a combination of incense that is used for specific spirits; thus, the appropriate types should be identified in order to please the spirit (1989, 155). Dahl further explains that "nice smells attract blessings and good spirits." This includes the burning of coffee berries (*buna*), which is common among many Cushitic communities (1989, 156). Musk however seems to contrast this when

he indicates that burning of incense in many Islamic societies is virtually to make the ritual place uninhabitable for evil spirits (1989, 186).

Manifestation of Spirits

Different communities have typical ways of explaining how spirits manifest themselves in the possessed person during the ritual healings. Many refer to the spirit "climbing upon the head" of the person. The Waswahili refer to the spirit climbing or rising to the head, according to Kim (2001, 218). Dahl mentions that the Waso Borana refers to the *ayaana* spirit "descending" on the possessed person (1989, 157). Boddy also asserts that the *zar* spirit is said to "descend" on a person (1989, 143). Giles further shows that the Waswahili refer to the spirit mounting on the "chair" (*kiti*) (1989, 148). This reference to the possessed person as the "chair" or "seat" (*kiti*) is also mentioned by Kim concerning the Waswahili. They believe that when jinn climb upon the person's head, they make them their "seats" (2001, 139).

After the spirit has agreed to manifest itself, communication with the shaman is now possible where inquiry is made concerning the reason for inflicting the patient with the disease. Dahl explains that an apology is made to the spirit as well as delivering the items that the spirit demands (1989, 156-157).

Accommodation versus Exorcism

Trimingham observes that there are different methods of treating possession cases: exorcism, appeasement and initiation into a guild. Exorcism occurs when a bad spirit (*pepo mbaya*) is "drawn out of a man," while appeasement is made when the spirit is pacified by having its demands met (1980, 118-119). However, the question

of whether spirits are exorcised or appeased has been a main concern for various writers.

The Islamic orthodox position, according to Al-Ashqar, is that jinn (and other spirits) are to be driven away by possibly reciting the Qur'an especially the verse of the throne (al-Baqara 255), or by mentioning Allah. Muhammad commanded jinn to leave by striking and cursing them (1998, 209). This orthodox position is upheld by the Muslim men in northern Sudan as Boddy reports. They assert that spirits are removed from the body by force. Their women counterparts maintain that the *zayran* spirits cannot be got rid of at all. The possessed person is supposed to enter into a "contractual relationship with the spirit(s) responsible for her lapse from health" (1989, 142-143). This kind of a relationship between the patient and the spirit is also mentioned by Lewis who reckons that the patient learns to live with the spirit. A number of ceremonies have to be performed in its honor, hence the formation of healing cults (1989, 80). Kim however observes that the Swahili rituals involve more of pacifying the spirits instead of expelling them from the patient. This is a concept termed as adoricism that Kim borrows from Luc de Heusch (2001, 245-246).

Women in Folk Islam

Amal quotes Jalaldin al Rummy, a Sufi poet as saying this about a woman: "Woman is a ray of God, not a mere mistress. The creator's self, as it were, not a mere creature" (Amal 2000, 20). Perhaps such an understanding of women would allow for the participation of women in mystical experiences. Shapire records about women's participation in Sufism. She posits that the first true saint of Islam was a woman called Rabi'a al-Adawiyya, who was "credited with introducing the concept of pure love into the austere ascetic outlook of early Sufism" (1995, 426). There were other

pious Muslim women who participated in Sufism even though there seemed to have been mixed reactions about them. Some Sufis (though fewer) considered women as temptresses who ensnare pious men into the worldly trap (ibid., 428). However, many Sufis did acknowledge the positive aspects of women and appreciated them (ibid, 429).

Muslim women have been known to visit the tombs of saints in order to acquire *baraka* (blessings) especially for bearing children. Parshall reports that a large number of women in one Islamic country visited the shrines of departed Muslim mystics with the issue of fertility as a main reason for the visit (1983, 94). There are other women in various societies who are respected for being people of power since they exude power or *baraka* (blessings) to alleviate people's problems. Musk (1989, 118) reports that in Morocco a midwife is considered a major power practitioner as she offers "herbal remedies and sympathetic magic" to help barren women become fertile. Other Muslim women who are people of power are the female practitioners in the spirit possession cults. The following sub-section will highlight the participation of women in these possession cults as practioners, patients and observers.

Participation of Muslim Women in Possession Cults

One common feature of Muslim women is their participation in possession cults. Different Scholars attest to this fact. Boddy, who studied the participation of women in the *zar* cult of Northern Sudan, asserts that women are more vulnerable to spirit attacks mostly because of their femininity, exposure to impurities of life like dust, bad odors and so forth. Women are inherently frail and not able to uphold the orthodox tenets of ideals of Islam (1989, 141-142). Generally Muslim women participate on different levels in possession cults. Some are ritual leaders of

practitioners, while others are the patients to be treated. There are those who attend the sessions merely as observers.

Participation as practitioners

Women generally are allowed to participate as practitioners in the possession cults as long as they exhibit power. Musk (1989, 119) mentions women *shaykhat* (female practitioners) of the *zar* ceremonies in the Arab world, who are highly esteemed for being able to control the *zar* spirit. Boddy reports a number of her informants who were *shaykhat* of the *zar* cult in northern Sudan. These *shaykhat* are able to communicate with the *zar* spirits to find out identities and demands (1989, 155). It is the responsibility of the *shaykha* (sing. for *shaykhat*) to know the right fumigation for the afflicting spirit if she is to be successful as a healer. This fumigation involves the burning of incense and other sweet smelling substances. Each spirit prefers a certain type of smell to be appeased.

Cooper illustrates how the *bori* cult among the Hausa people of Maradi valley in Nigeria is led by the “most important and influential aristocratic woman” (1998, 29). Larsen also cites the case of the cult of *Kibuki* (*ngoma ya kibuki*) among the Zanzibari people where women feature prominently. She asserts that the practitioners of this cult are solely women since only women participate. Any male participation is minimal (1995, 233). Among the Swahili along the East African Coast women participate in the possession ceremonies called *pungwa* as *waganga* (practitioners). This is reported by Giles, who mentions Rukia and Sophia as two of the *waganga* (practitioners) among the Swahili people (Giles 1989, 218). Dunbar cites the example of female ritual leader, Soreya, who led the *tombura zar* cult in Sinnar, Sudan. Soreya was illiterate and had received no religious training. However, she positioned herself

at the “frontier between the ordinary canons of formal religion . . . and the disorderly realm of personal spirits” (1999, 404).

Participation of Muslim women as patients

Dahl contends that the *ayaana* possession cult in Isiolo town in Kenya draws its membership from destitute people as well as from widows and wives of wealthy Somali traders (1989, 152). Kim also mentions that of the two types of *zar* rituals performed in North Eastern Africa and the Middle Eastern countries, the private types is mostly held by wealthy women who try to avoid public attention (2001, 182). The assertion thus far is that possession cults are frequented mainly by women patients, as also indicated by a number of scholars including Ben-Amos (1994, 119). His research on the Olokun possession cult among the Edo people in Nigeria led her to conclude that women were the majority of the patients. Giles also contends that it is women who mainly frequent the possession sessions although it would be inappropriate to assume that they were the only attendants. A few men also attend (1989, 237). Giles further says that of these women patients many are well educated and some have been influenced by the Western lifestyle having traveled and lived abroad (*ibid.*, 236). The Zaramo women of the Coast of Tanzania are also the majority of the *wateja* (patients) in the possession cults though even men participate according to Swantz (1986, 241).

The patients of the possession cults normally resist entry until illness or some reproductive problems like frequent miscarriage occur. Boddy observes that women in northern Sudan call for a *zar* ceremony when they experience fertility problems. Apparently the *zar* spirits like to disrupt human fertility, and hence women are more susceptible to their attacks (1989, 142). Giles likewise mentions that the Swahili women do not become patients in the possession cults voluntarily. They are forced to

join the sessions when they experience reproductive problems (1989, 254). Spirit possession is regarded as the most common cause of sickness among the Segeju women of Tanzania. Gray asserts that the majority of *shetani* cult members among the Segeju people are women from wealthy families since the ritual sessions require a lot of money (1969, 171).

Participation of Muslim women as observers

There is need to qualify the term “observers” since there are those in the audience who are established cult members and others who are non-members and yet are attracted by the dancing and drumming. The latter observers seek for some entertainment, while the former were once patients, but now are healed. These healed patients become regular participants at the cult sessions, as observed by different scholars (like Swantz 1986, Larsen 1995 and so forth).

The observers of the cult sessions are responsible for the continual singing, dancing and clapping that is necessary for the appeasement of the afflicting spirit. Larsen contends that the members of the spirit cults in Zanzibar participate by singing, clapping of hands and moving their bodies in the *dhikri* –rhythm. In the process the spirit rises to the head of the patient and makes her/him to scream and move violently (1995, 113). Some of the Larsen’s informants were regular attendants of the cult sessions although they would not be suffering from any ailment or problem at the particular time. Yet as they attend they would actively participate and in the process the spirit would rise to their heads and thus go into a trance. Some of these active observers as cited by Larsen include wealthy women like Fatma, who own several houses and cars and has traveled abroad. Fatma attends the cult sessions

regularly and her “Christian spirit” from Madagascar rises to her head and makes her drink alcohol even though she is a Muslim (Larsen 1995, 83).

Among the regular cult attendants there is a possibility of one increasing positional status within the cult’s organizational structure. Swantz mentions that the Zaramo cult members are able to increase their ranks and attain the status of a healer (*mganga*). However, women cult members rarely go beyond the “turban, *kilemba* stage” in order to be full *waganga* (practitioners). Swantz presupposes that spirits prefer to speak through male practitioners than female ones (1986, 232). This ranking within the structure of the possession cults is also recorded by Giles although she does not mention whether women cult members are restricted as in the Zaramo cult mentioned above (Giles 1989, 118).

Roles of Possession Cults among Muslim Women

This section will consider what scholars have studied and concluded as the roles played by possession cults among the Muslim women. Giles (1989, 268-272) has outlined some of the roles played by the Swahili possession cults which will be outlined herein with additions from other scholars.

1. Possession cults are avenues to higher status and authority. Dunbar acknowledges that women are given official positions of authority within the cults’ organizational structure (1999, 399).
2. Possession cults provide an explanation of illnesses and misfortune (also Boddy 1989).
3. Possession cults provide a way of combating illnesses, thus are therapeutic cults (also Kim 2001).

4. Possession cults provide psychological catharsis including social attention and support the patient.
5. Possession cults are sources of entertainment for both participants and members of the public at large.
6. Possession cults provide the wider society with a meaningful belief system and practice.
7. Possession cults act as symbolic expressions of the particular society. Boddy (1989) views possession cults as cultural idioms. Giles sees possession cults as cultural texts which express the cultural identity of the people (1999, 143).

Lewis (1989) also adds his suggestion for the role played by possession cults among women. This will be discussed at length in the following section of this paper. Prior to that, however, it would be expedient to consider what Islam portrays as the status and role of its feminine adherents. Several scholars have suggests that the way Islam views women and the role it gives them influence greatly their inclination to possession cults.

Status and Roles of Muslim Women

The examination of status and role of Muslim women below is taken cautiously because of an awareness of the great diversity of Muslim societies worldwide. Saal affirms this when he mentions that some societies treat women unjustly and with despise, while others admire and protect women for their beauty (1993, 57).

Some non-Muslim writers have tended to criticize the way women are treated in Islam, according to Glasser and Napoleon's report (1998, 17). A number of Muslim writers however refute this claim that is perceived as an attempt to distort the Islamic

image regarding women. One such writer is Khan who vehemently defends the position of women in Islam. He asserts that "Islam has never asserted that woman is inferior to man: it has only made the point that woman is differently constituted" (Khan 2003, 11). This is affirmed by Abdalati, who contends that a woman is "as vital to life as man himself", and that Islam has given her rights and privileges (Abdalati 1975, 184). Saal has also indicated that Muslim women do not see themselves as oppressed or dominated by men. They are deemed to have inner strength and power that is nevertheless concealed. Concerning this strength Saal records that:

It can be seen in her ability to adapt to social structures. Since family is so important in a Muslim society, women exert significant influence and control. In their eagerness to keep cultural traditions, they direct the family in religious and social practices (1993, 57).

A woman thus seems to be highly esteemed according to the above assertions. However, the Qur'an seems to place another perspective on women that would make them appear to be inferior to men. Sura 4:34 says: "Men are the protectors and maintainers of women, because Allah has made one of them to excel the other, because they spend from their means." The collections of Hadith are replete with assertions about women. In some of these hadith Muhammad is reported to have said that:

- "One woman, of 99 women, is in heaven, and the rest of them are in Fire."
- "Fire has been created for the senseless, the women, except for the one who obeys her husband."
- "Men perish when they obey women."
- "Men are in good state as long as they do not obey women."
- "Beware of women; the first temptation among the children of Israel was caused by them."

- “I fear no temptation that would befall my people but for the temptation of women and wine.”
- “But for the woman, man could have entered paradise.”
- “Three things corrupt prayer: women, dogs and donkeys.”
- “A man’s prayer is interrupted if a donkey, black dogs, and women pass by him nearby.” (Hadiths are quoted by Dagher 1995, 17-18).

All these assertions about women in the hadiths seem to contradict what Muslim scholars above (Khan 2003, and Abdalati 1975) perceive as the status of Muslim women. The prophet seemed to have had a negative attitude towards women as seen from the above quotation from the hadith. He may have had a positive disposition towards them at the beginning of Islam as he endeavoured to change their status from that of the pre-Islamic era. The roles and status of Muslim women have been different over time and in different cultural settings. Some of these are highlighted below with a focus on the contemporary times.

Religious Role

Religious piety of women is recommended according to a hadith that says: “Shall I not tell you what the best form of wealth is? It is a pious woman who is a delight to her husband’s eyes” (Abu Dawud Sunan, as quoted by Khan 2003, 17). Aisha, the favorite wife of Prophet Muhammad, is reputed to have been well versed in religious issues and she is accredited with writing 2210 of the prophet’s sayings (ibid., 49). Khadija, the first wife of the prophet, is believed to have been pious since she gave up her life, property, leisure and comfort, for the sake of the prophet (ibid., 51). These two examples of pious women indicate that women played significant roles in religion. Contemporary Muslim women are exhorted to emulate the piety of religious

women by observing all the requirements stipulated. However, the physical nature of women may seem to be a hindrance to their religious piety. Women are not allowed to observe the religious duties like praying, fasting, or even touch the Qur’an while in their menses or even during their post-partum bleeding as implied in the various sections of the *Islamic Fatwa Regarding Women* compiled by Muhammad bin Abdul-Aziz Al-Musnad. Abdalati perceives this restriction not as a negative prohibition, but as a privilege given to women (1975, 189). This privilege however seems to be outweighed by Rippin’s assertion concerning the position of women in Islam. He claims that Muslim women are virtually excluded from substantial areas of Muslim rituals because of various reasons that include the menses. Women are excluded from public worship because they can prove to be a major distraction for men during prayer. Women are also excluded for the benefit of their own privacy since they are to be protected from the public. The responsibility of women within the family setting is said to prevent them from regular attendance of scheduled religious events (Rippin 2001, 269-270).

Social-cultural Role of Muslim Women

Muslim women are very keen to participate in key family events like weddings, circumcision, child birth ceremonies, and so forth. Saal contends to this when he adds that such events are important to women who mark each occasion with careful observance of local and religious customs where possible (1993, 61). Muslim women are also careful to observe the ceremonies included in the Islamic calendar like *maulidi* (Prophet Muhammad’s birthday celebrations), *Idd ul-fitr* (marking the end of Ramadhan fasting), and other Islamic events. Saal also acknowledges that

women play a key role as guardians of such religious practices as well as the cultural ones to a large extent (ibid.).

The social world of Muslim women includes spirits, which are involved in their daily lives. The spirits can be good or bad. The majority are however malevolent and are said to cause afflictions on people. Women especially are prone to their attack which makes them to be fearful. This fear is evident in the way they behave (Colgate 2000, 37). They play a crucial socio-cultural role that involves dealing with the malevolent spirits for the sake of their own sanity and health as well as of the society at large.

Marital Role of Muslim Women

The Qur'anic injunction for women to stay in their homes (Surah 33:33) is interpreted as implying that their activities should be centered on their homes. These activities include: "house keeping, family requirements, management of all affairs at home, looking after the children- all are the woman's responsibility" (Khan 2003, 88). In addition, the prophet Muhammad was noted to have said that the best woman is one who "makes her husband happy . . . who obeys her husband . . . who does not do anything against his will as regards either herself or his wealth" (Sunan, Kitab an-Nikah 6168, as quoted by Khan 2003, 89). Hence the marital role of Muslim women cannot be underplayed given that they are responsible for their husbands' well-being as well as the upbringing of the children.

Propagation of family is implicitly the responsibility of the Muslim women. Immediately after the wedding they are expected to be pregnant and give birth preferably to baby boys. Failure to produce children and especially sons make Muslim women live in great fear as Trimmingham (1949, 25) and Boddy (1989, 174) report

about Sudanese women. This fear is especially directed to spirits which are believed to cause fertility maladies in Muslim women. Boddy further cites the case of the zayran spirit that are said to seize the womb of women and prevents any formation of a child. These spirits are believed to caused miscarriage and even bareness (1989, 167). A spirit called Umm al-Subyan in Egypt and Sudan is believed to cause miscarriage and stillbirths or it can even attack mothers with new born babies (Musk 1989, 39). This susceptibility of Muslim women to the activities of spirits makes them believe that the only solution is to establish a relationship with these spirits.

Women believe that to exorcise the spirits would only increase their afflictions as Boddy reports (1989, 143). Hence for the sake of their familial prosperity, Muslim women would prefer to appease the spirits regularly and thus join the cult groups. Boddy also notes an interesting parallel of this accommodation of spirits by women. Muslim women are able to "accommodate themselves to the marriage, however unhappy" (ibid., 143). Muslim men easily terminate a marriage contract by simply mentioning the divorce formula thrice ("I divorce you") in case they are not satisfied. Islam allows for divorce when a marriage relationship becomes "unhappy, cold and stagnant", and when such marriages are more harmful than divorce (Abdalati 1975, 182). Yet divorce remains to be one of a Muslim woman's great fear and shame. Trimmingham confirms this about the Nubian women in Sudan where a divorced woman returns back to her family as a slave without honor, unless another man takes her (1949, 9).

Lewis' Theory of Deprivation

Giles asserts that many scholars have tended to interpret possession cults as "therapeutic outlets for psychological frustrations and socio-religious exclusion

suffered by marginal elements of a society” (1989, 234). Lewis is one of such propagators who have influenced the thoughts of many. This study seeks to respond to Lewis’ interpretation of possession cults with respect to the Munyoyaya possession cult.

Lewis developed the theory of deprivation from his field research conducted in Somali involving the *Saar* possession cult. He also refers to the possession cults of various tribal groups, such as the *Wake* cult of Ethiopia (1989, 135-139), the *Zar* possession cult in Ethiopia (ibid., 55), possession illness among Swahili people of Kenya (ibid., 72) and the *bori* cult of Western Africa (ibid., 175). Lewis’ theory involves two main aspects, namely the classification of spirits and the socio-political dimensions of possession cult participants. These aspects are discussed below, followed by how scholars have responded to the theory generally.

Lewis’ Classification of Spirits

Lewis classifies spirits into two categories: peripheral spirits and the spirits involved in the central possession religions. Peripheral spirits are those who do not play any direct part in upholding the morality of the society. They are thus amoral according to Lewis (1989, 27). They strike their victims capriciously without any reference to the victims’ moral behavior in the society. They are often of “extraneous origin” as Giles comments (1987, 234). Lewis further asserts that these spirits are peripheral because they are believed to originate from outside the communities in which they manifest themselves. He further explains that they are normally from communities that are hostile to the one they manifest in.

Spirits involved in the central possession religions on the contrary are directly concerned with keeping the morality of society at large. Lewis asserts that these

belong to a system of beliefs that he refers to as the “main morality possession religions” or “central possession religions” as above. Of this type of spirits Lewis sees two kinds: the ancestral spirits and non-ancestral spirits. In both types the main practitioner “diagnoses sins and prescribes the appropriate atonement” (1989, 29). This helps in upholding the moral status of the society. Unlike the peripheral these spirits found in the central possession religions do not strike their victims haphazardly. They attack their victims as a result of some misconduct or evil deeds that warrant punishment (Lewis 1989, 133).

Participants of the Possession Cults

Lewis asserts that the people who participate in the two categories of the possession cults/religions are socially and economically different. Those involved in the peripheral cults are mostly women in a male-dominated society. These are basically deprived of some economic and social positions in the community and thus turn to the peripheral cults to get opportunities for “attention and respect” (Lewis 1989, 28). Lewis explains that women are more prone to traumatic events of life like jealousy and tension from co-wives, threat of divorce, neglect, whether real or imagined, from their husbands and so forth. They tend to attribute the illnesses they suffer to possessive spirits like *Sar* for the Somali women. The spirits tend to demand for expensive clothes, perfumes and jewelry which have to be bought by their husbands in trying to appease the spirits. The demands are made known through the possessed women. Hence the possession cults are seen as protest movements that women use against their husbands and men in general even though they are treated as illnesses as Lewis asserts (1989, 79).

Lewis refutes psychiatrists who reckon that possession cult members are mentally disturbed people and thus shamanism is considered to be an “institutionalized madhouse” (1989, 161). According to him insanity is distinguished from other possession states and so the possession cult members are normal people; even though a shaman may have been insane initially he gets cured from insanity to be able to assume his role as a shaman (ibid., 165).

Response to Lewis' Deprivation Theory

Giles (1987) examines the theories of marginality and particularly assesses Lewis' deprivation theory. She mentions that there are both proponents and opponents of the Lewis' theory among different writers. This section will similarly consider those who have embraced Lewis' theory and those who oppose it in regard to how they have carried out research.

Proponents of Lewis' Deprivation Theory

Margaret Rausch in her book, *Bodies Boundaries and Spirit Possession: Revision of Tradition* (2000) (Reviewed by Kapteijns, 2001) shows how the people who participate in possession cults are those who feel they are oppressed by the normative rules and gender boundaries set in a Moroccan society. Hence Margaret is in agreement with Lewis that the possession cults are alternative movements especially for downtrodden people like women.

Crook (1998) consents with Lewis in providing evidence that peripheral male possession cults are “vehicles” used to improve one's social standing. He further agrees with Lewis' classification of peripheral cults and central religion whereby the

latter is represented by Buddhism, which plays a central role in the society unlike the shamanistic possession cults.

Walker (1972) considers various possession cults in Africa and Afro-American religions of Cuba, Trinidad, Bahia and Brazil. She agrees with Lewis by asserting that most devotees of possession cults are downtrodden women who have few opportunities of gaining self esteem (1972, 7) and hence turn to possession cults. These devotees are further said to be members of the lower economic class as well as men who are involved in abnormal behaviors like homosexuality (ibid., 6).

Castillo (1994) is another proponent of Lewis. He presents case histories of illnesses related to spirit possession in South Asia and asserts that women are considered to be of lower status and are subordinated by men. They therefore resort to spirit possession cults where their egos are boosted. Elias (2004) also presents a case study of how young female Malay workers in a factory participate in spirit possession cults as a reaction to the frustrations they face, thus consenting to Lewis' theory.

Sonja (2001) reviews Doris Barga's book where she examines five of the main cases of spirit possession mentioned in the fictitious story Tale of Genji. Doris, as reported by Sonja, asserts that the possessed person is a “disempowered person” and hence participating in possession cults provides an avenue for expressing their resentment. Women especially are reported to join possession cults as a protest against insensitivity of men or against oppressive social situations (2001, 77).

Malory (1994) examines possession cults among the Oyo-Yoruba Muslims and concludes that they are women's means of addressing their subordination. Goldsmith (1989/1990) explains the reason why Christian women in black Pentecostal Churches in Georgia Coast are susceptible to spirit possession and trance behavior. His explanation follows Lewis' theory of deprivation where women are

given the license to be aggressive and prominent when they are under the influence of the Holy Spirit. Such behavior is apparently allowed as they are not held directly accountable (1989/90, 54).

Opponents of Lewis' Theory of Deprivation

Writers have challenged Lewis' theory including Lewis himself, who later asserted that the peripheral theory was actually derived from non-participant researches that tended to be more subjective than objective to the possession phenomena, as Larsen asserts (1995, 21-22). Donovan (2000) refutes Lewis' deprivation theory based on the findings of research done in Brazil to compare socio-economic status of Brazilians and their cultic affiliations. Swantz (1986) does not consent with Lewis about Zaramo possession cults being peripheral cults or that the women participants are downtrodden. Zaramo women have had "greater social eminence," according to Swantz (1986, 244). Rasmussen (1994) further argues against Lewis' deprivation theory after she examined the phenomenon of spirit possession among the Tuareg people. Tuareg women are subjugated but they enjoy high status and privilege in the society.

Giles (1987) examined the role of spirit possession cults in the Swahili coastal area of Tanzania and infers that such cults are not peripheral to the society at large. They play a key role by illuminating the cultural possessions of the people (1987, 234), thus refuting Lewis' theory. Giles' contention is further buttressed by authors who have carried out ethnographic research among the Swahili people of the Coast of Kenya and Tanzania. This includes Kim (2001) who affirms that the concept of peripherality is unknown to Swahili people (2001, 283). Larsen (1995) also argues that the spirit possession phenomenon in Zanzibar town is not peripheral to the

society nor are the participants marginalized people; spirits are part and parcel of the daily life of the people (1995, 22). Boddy also shows that the Hofriyati women in northern Sudan are not subordinated to men. These women see themselves as complementary to men instead of being inferior (1989, 140).

Nourse (1996) refutes Lewis' theory by considering the Lauje possession mediums of Indonesia. These mediums are mostly women who do not perceive the possession cult as peripheral to society. To them these cults play a major role in society as they enable people to respond to spiritual forces in a proper way (1996, 425). Middleton's (1995) review of Sharp Lesler's book asserts that the *tromba* cult in Madagascar is not for the marginalized or powerless people. The female mediums involved are people of enormous power and respect.

Gray (1969) considers the *shetani* cult among Segeju people of Tanzania and refutes Lewis' theory that participants of possession cults are downtrodden and economically deprived people. Gray asserts that:

Shetani dance in a social-economic context is an example of conspicuous consumption. Only the wealthier families can afford this form of exorcism; participation in the dance is a means of publicly displaying their superior economic status (1969, 185).

Cooper (1998) mentions that many civil servants in Southern Niger have resorted to the *bori* cult as a source of healing power especially when they fear being redundant or when they face stiff competition at work (1999, 36). This then seems to disapprove Lewis' theory that possession cults are for marginalized people. Civil servants can not be marginalized or economically deprived people.

Colleyn (1999) also disputes Lewis' marginalization theory when he shows how men participate in the *Nya* cult in Mali. These men are of powerful heritages and are therefore not marginalized. Kenyon (2002) likewise disapproves Lewis'

deprivation theory after examining the case of a woman's participation in the *Zar* cult of central Sudan. She illustrates that participants of the cult come from various socio-economic backgrounds (2002, 90). Similarly, Wendl (1999) contends that the *Tchamba* cult among Mina people of Togo is not only for marginalized people. Even descent and professional people participate in the cult which functions as a multifunctional institution (1999, 120).

Methodological Literature Review

This present study focuses on the cultural aspects of a people group, the Munyoyaya people, in an attempt to understand them in a deeper way. Such a cultural study thus leads to a choice of research design that is inclined to qualitative research. Creswell defines qualitative research as "an inquiry approach useful for exploring and understanding a central phenomenon" (2002, 58). Qualitative research is essentially a descriptive method of research that is now gaining recognition as an authentic way of carrying out research. Gall, Gall and Borg admit that qualitative research in education and other social science disciplines has been undergoing rapid growth and change given the number of new journals and books that have been produced (2007, 445).

Nature of Qualitative Research

Qualitative research differs from quantitative in that the research findings of qualitative research are not arrived at using statistical procedures or other ways of quantification (Strauss and Corbin 1998, 10-11). Strauss further explains that there could be some data in a qualitative research that would need to be quantified, but the bulk of the analysis is descriptive and interpretative. Furthermore, the fact that qualitative research entails the study of phenomena requires that the intricate details

involved therein like the emotions, feelings, thought processes and so forth be obtained, such can not be extracted using quantitative research (ibid., 11).

Creswell notes that being descriptive implies that qualitative study is "interested in process, meaning, and understanding gained through word or pictures" (1994, 145). The concern with process implies that the research is not essentially focused in the outcomes or the products (Patton 2002, 159). The meanings attached to particular events, experiences and so forth, are also of central concern in qualitative research. This makes the qualitative researcher be the primary instrument of data collection and analysis instead of using questionnaires and other data collecting instruments that would not require the researcher to be present at the field of research. Qualitative researcher "physically goes to the people, setting, site, or institution to observe or record behavior in its natural setting" (Creswell 1994, 145). At the field of research the researcher then asks the participants broad and general questions in order to collect their detailed views in word or images. Creswell further notes that the qualitative researcher then analyses the data collected for description and themes, and it is from this data collected that the meaning is derived drawing on personal reflection and past research carried out (Creswell 2002, 58).

Qualitative Research Traditions

Gall, Gall, Borg (2007, 490) suggests that for anyone setting out to carry qualitative research, there is need to know the different qualitative research traditions and their characteristics. This knowledge will help the researcher to choose the appropriate tradition to use when carrying out the research. The table below summarizes the various qualitative traditions and their nature.

Table 4. Qualitative research traditions, grouped by type of phenomena investigated (From Gall, Gall & Borg 2007, 491).

Research Tradition	Involves the study of
1. Investigation of lived experience a) Cognitive b) Phenomenology c) Phenomenographic research d) Life history research	-Mental structures and processes used by individuals in different situations -Reality as it appears to individuals -Individual's conceptualization of reality -Individual's life experiences from their perspective
2. Investigation of society and culture a) Symbolic interaction b) Action research	- influence of social interaction on social structures and individuals' self-identity -Practitioners' self reflective efforts to improve the rationality and justice of their work
c) Ethnography d) Cultural studies and critical theory research e) Ethnomethodology	-Characteristic features and patterns of a culture -Contestation of oppressive power relationship in a culture -The rules that underlay everyday social interactions
3. Investigation of language and communication a) Narrative analysis b) Ethnographic c) Ethnography of communication d) Hermeneutics e) Semiotics f) Structurism and poststructurism	-Organized representations and explanations of human experience. -The content of document in cultural perspective -Use of speech in the social life of members of a cultural group -The process by which individuals arrive at the meaning of a text -Signs and the meanings they convey -The systematic properties of language, texts, and other phenomena

The table above shows that qualitative traditions seek to study phenomena that are found within cultural groups. These traditions basically involve investigating people's experiences as individuals, their socio-cultural phenomena, and the linguistic

aspects of their cultural setting. The specific aspects of a cultural group to be studied determine the type of qualitative tradition to be employed.

Summary of the Literature Reviewed

The literature that has been reviewed herein has covered a broad spectrum that eventually narrows down to the issue of spirit possession among folk Muslims. Kraft's worldview theory has been found to be very foundational in finding a rationale for the kind of research design used in this current study. The discussion on worldview paves way for a review of literature on folk Islam and what it involves. The materials that have been helpful in giving a better glimpse of folk Islam include: Musk (1979, 1989), Parshall (1980), Chapman (2003), and Kim (2001). Kim particularly is helpful since his approach to folk Islam is grounded in a perspective that has been borrowed for this current study. Hiebert, Shaw and Tienou (1999) are also useful in providing a better understanding of the nature of folk religions that helps in understanding folk Islam.

The literature that has been reviewed on the spread of Islam in the Eastern region of Africa has been found to be useful in giving a basis of how folk tendencies have been integrated into Islam. Trimingham (1980) and Aguilar (1996) have given a history of how specific African people groups embraced Islam including the Borana people of Kenya. Musk (1989), Larsen (1995), Boddy (1989) are some of the authors whose works have been carefully reviewed. They have provided information on the phenomenon of spirit possession among folk Muslims. Lewis' theory of deprivation is under scrutiny in this thesis as one of its purposes. Hence his main work (1989) has been reviewed in order to provide a clearer view of what the theory entails. Various

scholars have responded differently to this theory. Some of these have been included in this review.

The literature that has been particularly helpful in providing a background to facilitate the choice of the research design used in this current study includes Creswell (1994, 2002), Gall, Gall and Borg (2007), and Wellington (2000). These have given a basic understanding of the nature of qualitative research designs. The different traditions of qualitative research provided by Wellington were particularly helpful in providing a wide range of choices from which to choose from.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

This chapter seeks to describe the research design that has been selected and adopted in this study. The rationale behind the choice of this design will also be highlighted. Of the qualitative research traditions described by Gall, Gall and Borg (2007) this researcher has chosen to use the ethnographic research tradition. Gall, Walter and Joyce define ethnography broadly as the study of “characteristic features and patterns of a culture” (1996, 593). Creswell further distinguishes ethnography from other qualitative designs by asserting that ethnography includes “detailed descriptions of behavior, beliefs, and language rather than the generation of a theory, as found in grounded theory research. Also, ethnography examines groups, rather than individuals, as found in narrative designs” (2002, 481).

Rationale for a Qualitative Design

The qualitative research design is most appropriate in a study such as this that seeks to understand people and their behavioral practices. This study specifically seeks to understand how the Munyoyaya women participate in the phenomenon of spirit possession. Thus the choice of a qualitative research design is most appropriate as Creswell advises as he describes qualitative research. He asserts that it is an “inquiry approach useful for explaining and understanding a central phenomenon. In order to learn about this phenomenon, the inquirer asks participants broad, general questions, collects the detailed views of participants in the form of words or images” (2002, 58). The fact that the ethnographic researcher interviews participants directly is

appropriate for this study because most of the Munyoyaya women can not read or write thus no information can be derived from them using quantitative methods of data collection like administering questionnaires.

This study needs a design that would entail an intensive, firsthand study in order to report the various features of the cultural phenomenon appropriately and validly. Thus ethnographic research design is relevant in order to gain such an understanding, since it will provide a cultural description on the phenomenon, which, according to Spradley, is the first step towards understanding human species (1979, 10). The choice of the ethnographic design is also appropriate as it will ensure that the researcher gets to the Munyoyaya women themselves and find out their views about possession cults. This is a necessary step in seeking to understand a cultural group by first getting their emic (insiders') view before making any analysis of the phenomenon under study.

Rationale for the Perspective Chosen

The perspective chosen for this study is the cognitive anthropological perspective as mentioned above under the problem statement section. The cognitive anthropological school considers the "implicit knowledge that governs the various components of culture" as Kim explains (2001, 345). This school influenced Charles Kraft's tradition of the worldview and universal concept. The reason for using this choice of framework is that it suits the research area of this study that basically deals with seeking to understand the Munyoyaya women in a better way by considering their involvement in the spirit possession cults. This entails seeking to know their underlying assumptions, values and allegiances (worldview) in order to understand

why they would behave as they do. In order to narrow down such a wide scope the universal category of causality is the main focus thus of this study.

Research Procedure

There are many suggested procedures of carrying out qualitative research. For the purpose of this current study a combination of Creswell's (2002) and Spradley's (1980) suggestions are borrowed appropriately. Seven steps are given below to show the research procedure undertaken for this study.

Step One: Locating a Research Site and Entry

Since the ethnographic research design involves "describing, analyzing, and interpreting a cultural-sharing group's shared patterns of behavior, beliefs, and language" (Creswell 2002, 481), then this researcher's first step involves locating a site that would involve a culture-sharing group. This group was first identified as the Munyoyaya people, who inhabit various locations of the Tana River District of Kenya. Yet a specific research site had to be chosen; this researcher selected Madogo location as the research site. The reason for this is that this researcher had previously stayed among the Munyoyaya people in another location called Mororo that neighbors the Madogo location. Also, at the time of the research, this researcher was serving as a missionary in the Madogo location among the Munyoyaya people. This also did not require this researcher to get permission to enter the research site, since she was already living there. This researcher only needed to notify the Divisional Officer of the Madogo Division, of her intention to interview the Munyoyaya people.

Step Two: Selection of Informants

This step involved identifying the general population for the current study as well as identifying the method of sampling used. Sampling is necessary because the whole population can not possibly be interviewed for this study. Reference will also be made as to how the informants were selected.

- Population of the study:

The main population for this study comprises of the Munyoyaya Muslim women who reside in the Madogo location of Tana River district in Kenya. The Munyoyaya men were also included in this population as they were in the possession cults that the women participated in. The men's opinion of the Munyoyaya women also warranted the men to be included as the population of the study.

- Sampling procedure

Since not every Munyoyaya woman and man could possibly have been interviewed, this researcher had to use a sampling procedure that would enable her to get adequate information needed for the study. Creswell (2002, 194) suggests that purposeful sampling is the kind used in qualitative designs. This involves the researcher intentionally selecting individuals and sites for the research. Creswell (2002) further notes that there are various types of purposeful sampling. This researcher chose to use the snowball sampling method (Creswell 2002, 196). This method best suits this research because this researcher was not very familiar with other participants involved in the spirit possession phenomenon in the Madogo location. Thus she requested some of her Munyoyaya friends to recommend other individuals to study.

The number of Munyoyaya women thus sampled was thirteen. Their ages range from teenage to elderly women. These women participate in the possession

cults either as observers, patients and practitioners. The number of Munyoyaya men interviewed was fourteen and their ages range from late twenties to elderly men. One non-Munyoyaya man was interviewed and this was the Divisional Officer from whom permission had to be sought.

- Finding appropriate informants

Spradley acknowledges that the ethnographer-informant relationship is full of difficulties. One of the main challenges is to "initiate, develop and maintain a productive informant relationship" (1979, 45). At least for this researcher there was an on-going relationship with at least two informants, Saumu and Maimuna who also directed this researcher to other informants. But the challenge of getting good informants, who were willing to divulge information fully, was present. There was also the aspect of Muslim-Christian relation since most of the informants were Muslims and they knew this researcher as a Christian. Suspicion tended to build up especially as word went around the Madogo location the "Christian lady is seeking for information on *ayaana* spirits." Some informants voiced their fear that they were not allowed to give such cultural knowledge to Christians. Some opened up when this researcher took some small gifts as tokens of appreciation. Then there were some informants who were generally eager to divulge information as proud custodians of their cultural world. These are the kind of informants who were selected as good and this researcher kept calling on them for clarification. Spradley (1979, 46) also gave other suggestions for selecting good informants that this researcher used.

1. Encultured informants

Good informants are thoroughly cultured in that they "know their culture so well they no longer think about it" (Spradley 1979, 47). This is true of the Munyoyaya women and men interviewed in this research. They know their culture quite well.

2. Current involvement

Good informants are those who are currently involved in a cultural scene under study (ibid., 48). Spradley further asserts that the informants who move away from a cultural setting may easily forget the cultural details may not recall some crucial details (ibid., 49). Most of the Munyoyaya people interviewed have never left the vicinity of their place of birth. This is especially true for many of the women who did not get chances to study in secondary schools beyond their home places.

3. Unenculturated ethnographer

Spradley suggests that an effective informant relationship is established between a “thoroughly enculturated informant and a thoroughly unenculturated ethnographer” (1979, 50). This researcher has stayed among the Munyoyaya people for some few years yet cannot claim to have been enculturated into the Munyoyaya culture. She is a bit familiar with some of their basic beliefs and practices but only on the surface level. She had never attempted to know their deep level of culture. The area under study was also completely unfamiliar thus this researcher went in as a learner and as an unenculturated researcher.

4. Adequate time

Selection of good informants includes considering someone with adequate time for the research. The Munyoyaya people, especially the women, were available for the interviews especially in the afternoons when the temperatures are relatively high and they could not move around comfortably. The Ramadhan fasting that commenced on 24th September 2006 up to 23rd/24th October 2006 also brought mixed attitudes among the Munyoyaya people. Some were not available to divulge information as they asserted that during Ramadhan month evil spirits are not supposed

to be mentioned. However, some Munyoyaya people were available as they could not undertake a lot of activities as they fasted.

5. Non-analytic informants

Poor informants are those who think that they can help the researcher by giving some analytical insights drawn from psychological or social sciences (ibid., 53). This researcher is confident that the informants from the Munyoyaya community are not aware of psychology or social science, since majority especially the women can barely read or write.

Step Three: Understanding the Context of the Group

Creswell (2002, 494) appropriately suggests the need to understand the context or setting of the group under study. He explains that the context for ethnography is the “setting, situation, or environment that surrounds the cultural-group being studied.” Thus this researcher took this advice to find out the historical, economic, religious, political and social setting of the Munyoyaya people especially the women.

Step Four: Collection of Data

The time used for the collection of data for this research was four months- from August to November 2006. During this time data was collected using various forms that included: participant observation, ethnographic interviews and from documents. The use of questionnaires or brief field encounters was deemed unnecessary as suggested by Creswell (2002, 491). However some guiding questions were used during the interviews and observation sessions. Below is an overview of how this researcher used the techniques for collecting data.

Passive participant observation

Creswell (2002, 199) describes observation as the “process of gathering first-hand information by observing people and places at a research site.” This researcher observed the Munyoyaya women as they participated in possession sessions. However, she was not able to observe a full night session as she would have preferred because of her familial setting (she has small babies that needed her attention in the evening). For the sessions observed, this researcher identified who and what to observe as recommended by Creswell (2002, 201). During these spirit possession sessions this researcher took the role of a passive participant observer. Creswell (*ibid.*, 200) suggests that the passive participant observer is “an observer who visits a site and records notes without becoming involved in the activities of the participants.”

As a Christian this researcher took such a stance because of the nature of the possession sessions that involved being possessed by spirits. She could however observe keenly what was happening and who were involved in the sessions. Creswell (*ibid.*) cautions that by not actively participating a non-participant observer becomes “partially removed from actual experiences, and the observations made may not be as concrete as if the enquirer had participated in the activities.” To overcome this hurdle Patton’s advice was considered where he advocates for “empathic neutrality”. This requires the passive researcher to observe the phenomenon under study with care and interest in an empathetic way and yet not being neutral by being nonjudgmental in what the people engaged in (Patton 2002, 53). The date, time, and place of the observational site were noted immediately after this researcher arrived home from the session. Descriptive notes in a field notebook were made of what was observed and the different roles played by each participant.

Ethnographic Interviews

Creswell (2002, 203) asserts that qualitative interview is the “process where researchers ask one or more participants in a study mostly general, open-ended questions and record their answers.” This researcher thus followed this suggestion and tried to interview the informants using open-ended questions to allow them to answer from their own point of view. The interviews were unstructured so that the researcher’s perspectives would not hinder the appropriate response of the interviewees.

This researcher also chose to use one-on-one interview where only one participant was interviewed at a go. This was deemed appropriate because the research site is virtually an Islamic setting and the villagers were already aware that this researcher is a Christian. Group interview was avoided so that the participants would not influence each other’s thoughts. Audio-videos and cameras were also avoided although they could have given a more accurate record of the interviews or conversations. Some of the interviewees consented to the request of this researcher to jot down some notes during the interview sessions. For some interviewees this researcher gauged them as being suspicious and thus she did not write notes during the interviews. But she quickly rushed home and wrote most of the things discussed.

Documents

This researcher was able to obtain some maps and statistical records of the population of the Munyoyaya people. The records were from the office of the administrative leaders like the Divisional Officer (D.O) and the Chief of the Madogo location.

Ethical issues in data collection

Creswell (2002, 217) rightly says that the qualitative interviewing require “probing, highly personal questions.” The aspect of personality is therefore important in this study which requires that some ethical issues be considered in data collection. First the anonymity of the informants needs to be protected. Pseudonyms will be used for each participant in order to conceal their identity.

Secondly this researcher needed to inform the participants of the purpose of the study. Yet this researcher could not tell them that it was a missiological study that sought to come up with better ways of sharing the Gospel of Christ with them. This could have really jeopardized the data collection process bearing in mind the Christian-Muslim tension when it comes to sharing one’s faith. But the participants were told the general information and not the specifics as Creswell advises (2002, 217).

Thirdly, the research site is predominantly an Islamic area, this researcher needed to be respectful to them and adhere to some of their values. Being a lady, this researcher could not talk freely with men as this is an unwarranted ethical etiquette. Thus to avoid being a stumbling block she enlisted the help of her husband, who willingly accompanied her to the observations or interviewing sites. He was helpful in addressing the men. An appropriate mode of dressing was also employed by this researcher as required by the cultural ethics of the Munyoyaya people. This researcher did not hesitate to put on a long dress and cover her head with a veil as appropriate for all married Munyoyaya women.

Fourthly, during the interview sessions this researcher had to refrain from undertaking her missionary task of telling the people interviewed that only Jesus

could deliver them from the power of the spirits. Doing otherwise would have influenced their response probably in a negative way.

Step Five: Data Reduction

Ethnographic data collected in this research was lengthy and a lot. This required that it be summarized and sorted out into various thematic clusters for easier analysis (Wellington 2000, 133).

Step Six: Ethnographic Analysis and Findings

This researcher basically collected data as the participant’s view so that an emic perspective of their perception of the phenomenon of spirit possession can be presented. One of the peculiarities of ethnographic qualitative designs is that it is very descriptive. To keep to this aspect this study, as an ethnographic one, will give detailed description of the individuals and possession sessions as observed and as told by the participants. The attempt is to place the reader of this study figuratively in the possession setting so that they can almost “see” what goes on.

After describing the possession events and the individuals, the data was analysed in order to come up with appropriate themes concerning the phenomenon and people under study. Theme analysis is carried out using Charles Kraft’s worldview theory and universals. Biblical analysis of these themes will also be done since this is a missiological study that seeks to find appropriate ways of communicating Biblical truths with the Munyoyaya women. The rationale for choosing Kraft’s theory is given below.

Rationale of using Charles Kraft's worldview theory for ethnographic analysis

This researcher has appreciated Kim's emphasis on the "people factor" (2001, 4), which he has derived from Charles Kraft's concern for the "people-thing" (Kraft 2000, 1-2). According to Kraft, people should be distinguished from any given cultural structuring. By this he implies that it is "people who behave, people who do things. Culture doesn't do anything. It just sits there. Culture is like the script of a drama" (ibid.). He further asserts that these people behave the way they do because of their worldview assumptions. This theory of worldview as postulated by Kraft, thus motivated Kim (2001) to employ it as a tool for his analysis of the Swahili supernaturalism domain. Kim reasoned that the theory would enable him to investigate the Swahili culture by learning their worldview in cognitive and affective dimensions (2001, 250-251). It is on a similar premise that this researcher also sought to employ this tool for analyzing the context of the Munyoyaya people's worldview.

The six worldview universals that Kraft (2000, 8-1) postulates include: categorization/classification/logic, person/group, relationship, causality, time/event, and space/material world. These universals are used in this present study to discover and analyze the important contents of the worldview of the Munyoyaya women in relation to their belief in spirits.

Research questions

Apart from using the worldview theory as a tool for analysis, reference is also made on the research questions and how this study has attempted to answer them. Each of the four questions will be referred to in order to ensure that each is appropriately handled. The answers to these questions will be descriptive, interpretative and analytical in accordance to what each respective question requires.

Step Seven: Organising the Findings

The final step in this research involves organizing the descriptive, interpretative and analytical findings and writing them in a logical flow.

Validation and Verification

Gall, Walter and Joyce (1996, 618) cautions any researcher attempting to carry out ethnographic research to be aware of being tempted to fabricate some reports. Some ethnographic findings have been found to be fiction because they have not been scientifically proven. One main weakness of ethnographic research tradition is that there are no universal laws to govern any attempts of fraud, as Gall, Walter and Joyce report (ibid.). Aware of this, this researcher seeks to give an authentic representation of the phenomenon under study, as the main purpose qualitative research requires. Gall, Walter and Joyce further asserts that this purpose is mainly to be able to capture the insider's (emic) perspective with accuracy and completeness (ibid., 575). To ensure this, this researcher sought to do member checking where some individuals were enlisted to review the description made in the researcher's report. One of the missionaries working among the Munyoyaya people was asked to go through the report to ensure validity. Other people conversant with the Munyoyaya customs were also asked to verify whether the information given herein is valid.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS AND DATA ANALYSIS

This chapter reports the findings of the research carried out among the Munyoyaya women of the Madogo location. The findings are presented in three forms: descriptive, interpretative and analytical forms. Each of the four research questions of this current study will be considered separately in order to give descriptive details of the participation of the Munyoyaya women in possession cults. These details are also interpreted and analysed accordingly. Interpretation will also be based on an evaluation of Lewis' deprivation theory in light of the context of the Munyoyaya possession cults and their participants. Analysis from a biblical perspective is also provided since this study is also missiologically carried out.

Below is the table showing the backgrounds of the informants interviewed in the Madogo location. This is deemed necessary in order to provide some knowledge of the kind of people interviewed.

Table 5. Informants' (women) background

Name(pseudonyms)	Marital status	Religious status	Occupation	Possessed or not	Level of involvement in possession cult
Saumu	Married	Not very religious, does not observe prayer times	House wife	Possessed	Attends <i>ayaana</i> sessions, hopes to be full practitioner

Maimuna	Married	Tries to observe prayer time	Fied officer with an NGO	Not possessed	Consults <i>ayaana</i> practitioner because of her daughter, Nuru
Aruki	Married	Quite religious	Laboratory technician in a secondary school	Diagnosed as having <i>ayaana</i> together with her son, but does not believe	Gives money to purchase things required to appease her sisters' <i>ayaana</i> spirits
Sinti	Not married	Not religious	Student	Not possessed	Attends sessions to see
Nyanya (Sinti and Sumu's grandmother)	Widow	Quite religious	Farmer	Not possessed	Not attend <i>ayaana</i> sessions
Fatuma	Divorced	Not religious	House wife	Possessed	Attends sessions
Tunda	Married, not religious	Dropped from class five	House wife	Possessed at some point	Attends sessions
Amina	Married	Not religious early	House wife	Possessed at one point	Not attend sessions any more
Hadike	Married to practitioner Hake		House wife	Not possessed	Attends sessions
Rukim	Married	Not religious	Runs a small business	Possessed	Attends sessions
Ummi	Widow	Tries to observe prayer time	House wife	Not possessed	Not attend sessions
Hadiya	Married,	Not religious	House wife	Possessed	Attends sessions

All the women informants shown in table 5 above are Munyoyaya women. The men interviewed were from different tribal affiliation as shown below. These men were interviewed on a different premise from that of the women, hence the differences in the variables of the two tables.

Table 6. Informants' (men) background

Name	Occupation	Age group	Education level	Level of involvement in possession cult	Tribal affiliation
Borushi	<i>Ayaana</i> practitioner	Early fifties	Illiterate	Practitioner	Borana
Chief Adan	Administrative Chief of the Madogo location	Early forties	Form Four	Attend some sessions but on administrative purposes	Malakote
Amin	Village Headman	Late fifties	Illiterate	Attends sessions	Munyoyaya
Omar	Home guard	Late forties	Semi-illiterate	Attends sessions	Orma
Hassan	Practitioner	Twenty nine	Semi-illiterate	“Chief” (<i>Abba Sera</i>) practitioner	Orma
Mahammud	Casual worker	Late twenties	Semi-illiterate	Wife sick, diagnosed with <i>ayaana</i> , called for <i>ayaana</i> sessions	Munyoyaya
Al-Amin	Former soldier with Kenya army	Late thirties	Form four	Sessions performed in his compound though not like it	Munyoyaya
Gujema	Former soldier with Kenya army	Late fifties	Form four	Not attend sessions	Munyoyaya
Maalim Sheikh	Islamic teacher (Sheikh)	Early thirties	Most learned Islamic teacher in Madogo	Does not attend and yet does not prohibit people	Munyoyaya
Ayub	Cleaner, Messenger in private nursery school	Late twenties	Semi illiterate	Not involved since he became a Christian	Munyoyaya
Abbu	Area Education Officer	Early thirties	Form four and college	Not participate	Munyoyaya
Mzee Ibrahim	Farmer	Late fifties	Illiterate	Not participate	Munyoyaya

The ambiguity in the ages of the informants in the tables above is largely because many do not know the exact year that they were born. Apparently Munyoyaya women prefer to give birth to children at home with the help of traditional midwives, hence most of the childbirths are not registered for people to know when they were born. Semi-illiteracy also implies that the informants have been to school at one point but dropped early such that they can barely read and write.

Background of the Munyoyaya People

The language and historical background of the Munyoyaya people has already been mentioned in Chapter One (Introduction) of this study. This section will give additional notes to the background of the Munyoyaya people that will include how they settled in the Madogo area, how Islam spread among them, their participation in folk Islam and their structural organization.

Settlement in the Madogo Area

Abbu (2006) told this reporter that his father, Gujema, was among the first people to have settled in the Madogo area. Interview with Gujema (2006) confirmed this, as he explained that the first three people to settle in the Madogo area were Mzee Gariso (deceased), Mzee Ali Roka, and then himself. These people found the area heavily forested and inhabited by elephants. Other people in the neighboring vicinity wondered why anyone would choose to settle in such a place; yet these first settlers had a genuine reason for choosing to stay there. They had come from as far as Mbalambala and Saka (see map in the Appendix section) having left these areas because of insecurity. The time was around 1963 when the Somali *Shifita* war spread into the interior of the Munyoyayaland and caused the people to flee for safety,

according to Gujema. Before this attack by *Shifita*, the Munyoyaya people had many camels, sheep, goats and cattle. The Somali *Shifita* took many of these and till today the Munyoyaya people have never been able to recover the large herds of livestock that they had. He also reports that this new settlement was given the name Madogo because of a seasonal river called *Laga Madogo* that traversed the area.

Cultural Structures and Organization

The Munyoyaya have a clan system that is not very apparent to an outsider. There are five major clans which include: Maidoyo, Meta, Kalala, Nyurtu and Ilani. There were seven clans initially but only these five remained. The leaders of the Munyoyaya people had to be from the two main clans, namely, Maidoyo and Illani. Gujema (2006) is the traditional spokesman of the Munyoyaya people in the Madogo location; he comes from one of these two leading clans.

The Munyoyaya people have a traditional leadership system that was instituted long before the colonial era. The leaders had to be those who could foresee events. The first Munyoyaya leader was Roba Jiddo who had prophesied a “bird” that would come and had big wings. Boru Roba was another acclaimed leader of the Munyoyaya people who was a renowned rainmaker. He could make rain fall by merely dancing (incidentally, *Roba* means rain in Munyoyaya language). Gujema (2006) mentioned that he was the one who held Boru Roba’s authority and “chair” as the traditional spokesman of the Munyoyaya people. He even went to the pilgrimage to Mecca in 2001. When he came back he could pray until rain fell as it did in 2001 when Madogo location became flooded (this researcher recalled the rains in that year). Today, Gujema prays every Friday and when he prays for rain specifically he says that it even

drizzles. Hence he qualifies as a leader of his people. He is also the nominated councilor of the Madogo location.

Islam among the Munyoyaya People

According to Gujema (2006), the Munyoyaya people embraced Islam around 1930s. This was when a certain Maalim Mansa Nyacho and Sheikh Dulo spread Islam after receiving Islam teachings from the Somali and Arab Islamic teachers. Arabs like Ba-Yusuf (a prominent businessman) arrived as traders and went as far as Mbalambala and Saka for business purposes as well as to try and convince the Munyoyaya people to embrace Islam. Prior to this the Munyoyaya were deeply entrenched in the worship of their traditional God, *Waaka*, and offering of sacrifices to dead ancestors. Like the Boni who were described as having no religion before the advent of Islam (Faulkner 2006, 65), so the Munyoyaya were said to have been people of no religion (*wakafiri*- Swahili meaning pagans), as Maalim Sheikh (2006) asserted. Mzee Ibrahim (2006) adds that Sheikh Dulo, one of the first Munyoyaya people to embrace and preach Islam was his father. He was able to convince many Munyoyaya people to embrace Islam together with their families. As Gujema also asserted, the Munyoyaya became Muslims en mass since “they easily follow a person once they are convinced.” However Islam was rooted among the Munyoyaya people from 1947. Smaller Islamic schools, *madrassa* (Arabic meaning Qur’anic centres) were established, where the Munyoyaya people were to be given Arabic and Qur’anic instructions.

Apparently, the Arab Islamic teachers discouraged the Munyoyaya people from taking the formal education offered by the Christian or government secular schools. This confirms what Quinn and Quinn reports concerning the spread of Islam

into the interior parts of Kenya. They assert that Muslims prohibited their children from attending secular government schools or Christian established schools (Quinn and Quinn 2003, 111). The repercussion of such a stance is recorded by Sperling, who asserts that the Muslims along the East African hinterland became underprivileged and were deemed as less competent by the colonial administration because of lack of formal education (2000, 297). It was Gujema (2006) who realized that he and his fellow Munyoyaya people were being taunted by the colonial people for being illiterate while concentrating on Islamic teachings in the madrassa (Qur'anic centres). In a remorseful voice, Kunyo regretted that the Arabs had told them to concentrate on Islamic instructions while they themselves did not hesitate to enroll their children in formal schools. However, this did not deter the advancement of Islam among the Munyoyaya people. Gujema continued to be instrumental in advising the Munyoyaya parents to take their children to formal schools as well as to Qur'anic centers (*madrassa*). He encouraged the establishment of schools even by Christian missionary organizations that had an interest of educating the Munyoyaya people.

Gujema went ahead to encourage the construction of mosques in the Madogo area where the first mosque was constructed in 1972 and expanded in 1998 in order to accommodate the increasing number of Muslims in the Madogo location. Gujema was also involved in the construction of a mosque near his house after he came back from the pilgrimage to Mecca in 2001. Maalim Sheikh (2006) admits that Islam has spread relatively fast in the Madogo location. He asserts that currently there are six mosques constructed either by individual people or by joint efforts of the local community.

To ensure that people are grounded in Islamic teachings, the Munyoyaya people facilitated the learning of Islamic teachers. A number of young people have attended the Islamic School in Lamu. Maalim Sheikh (2006) disclosed that he was

presently the most learned Islamic teacher in Madogo. He received his Islamic education from Lamu and Mombasa. The teachers before him were a bit versed in Islamic teachings yet not adequately prepared to help the Munyoyaya people in their struggle with the traditional beliefs and practices. The KUPNet Report (1995) asserts that the Munyoyaya people claim to be Muslims, but they still have very strong traditional beliefs and customs. This is because many of them do not understand Islam, which “makes them turn to their previous animistic practices to find solutions to their life’s problems” (1995, 37). The immediately following section is an overview of how the Munyoyaya people participate in these folk practices while still maintaining that they are “true Muslims”. However, before giving this overview it is only fair to attempt to illustrate how they endeavor to be true to the orthodox Islamic tenets.

Participation in Orthodox Islam

The Munyoyaya people are overtly Muslims; they are proud to have been “born Muslims”, as many would assert. This may be justified by the number of men that stream to the mosque for the daily prayers after the call from the minaret. The month of Ramadhan fasting started on the 24/23rd September 2006 and ended on the 25th October 2006 in the Madogo location. This researcher observed that the Munyoyaya people, both young and old, were keen to observe the fast as a requirement of Islamic teachings. Some people working in far places like Nairobi joined their families in the Madogo location preferring to observe the fast there. It was reported by Omar (2006) that it is during the month-long fast that people become pious. Those who had not been attending prayers or giving alms, or other religious duties become keen on these during the Ramadhan month, which is regarded as

“holy”. A number of men even stay overnight in mosques during the fasting month as they pray and recite the Qur’an. Even the Munyoyaya people like Mzee Ibrahim, who practice farming along the Tana River, were keen to fast during the “holy” month in spite of being away from the Madogo shopping center where all public religious duties were observed.

Maalim Sheikh (2006) asserts that the Munyoyaya women are not keen on religious matters. He mentions that they do not pray as required and that many preferred to attend the spirit possession and Sufi sessions. However, this researcher observed that the number of the Munyoyaya women who put on the *ghombis* (Munyoyaya word for veil) was increasing. *Ghombis* is a flowing veil that completely covers the head, shoulders, hands, and chest. It seems to have been introduced by pious or fundamental Somali women, who sought to adhere strictly to the religious obligations requiring a Muslim woman to be fully veiled. The *ghombis* is preferred by the stricter Muslims instead of the traditional veil (Munyoyaya: *garbasa*) and *dira* (Munyoyaya word for long sleeveless dress).

The Munyoyaya women have a traditional way of dressing which the Islamic leaders advice against. This is called *wirr* (in Munyoyaya) and consists of a piece of seamless *lesso* (Swahili word for brightly colored piece of cloth) that covers the torso and is wrapped around the waist. What irks the Islamic leaders about this particular covering is that it leaves the shoulders bare, which is unacceptable in Islam. Hence they have gone around the Madogo location, according to Maalim Sheikh (2006), trying to advice Munyoyaya women on suitable dressing.

Folk Tendencies among the Munyoyaya People

Virtually every Munyoyaya child this researcher encountered had an amulet or charm tied on his/her neck, arm or waist. Inquiries concerning these charms and amulets revealed that they were Qur’anic verses inscribed on pieces of papers, which are then tied and sewed in order to be held firmly on the child’s neck with a string. The purpose for this is to protect the children, or any one wearing it, from the effects of malevolent spirits and the evil eye of jealousy. The fear of the evil eye is rampant among the Munyoyaya people. Saumu (2006) had a series of still-births before she finally got her second son. She had to name him an unfavorable name, Huko, in order to wade away any inclinations by evil spirits to take this child. Some baby boys’ hair is plaited like girls’ to avert any evil eye of jealousy that would affect the boy. Rukim (2006) cautioned this researcher not to admire a baby or anything in a Munyoyaya house. This is not only offensive; it attracts evil spirits towards the baby or the admirable object. Qur’anic inscriptions are hanged on the door post or right opposite the door to avert any effects from malevolent spirits or the evil eye.

Other folk tendencies cited by Maalim Sheikh (2006) are Sufism and spirit possession rituals. The latter are the main focus of this paper, thus a lengthy discussion will be offered in subsequent pages of this study. Sufism in the Madogo location is not acceptable to the Muslim leaders, according to Maalim Sheikh. This is essentially because the Sufis do not stop their activities when they hear the call for prayer from the minaret. Maalim Sheikh also explains that the mixing of women and men during the Sufi practices makes “any good thing in Sufism to be null and void”. Sufis in the Madogo area assemble in a house and spend a whole night singing and clapping hands as they praise the name of Allah. These Sufis still claim to be Muslims. But Maalim Sheikh and other Islamic teachers do not think they are. Thus

they “slowly try to woe them back into the right way by preaching to them slowly and wisely” says Maalim Sheikh.

Ways of Healing Diseases among the Munyoyaya People

The Munyoyaya people have various ways of dealing with diseases. There are health facilities in the Madogo location. One is a government health center with a clinical officer in charge. There are two nurses and a subordinate staff who attend to the sick people daily. There is even a maternity and M.C.H (Mother-Child Health) facility on the same premise to cater for pregnant women and new born babies. Within the Madogo shopping center is a private health clinic called Pona Medical clinic, which offers what is not available at the health center. The Munyoyaya people prefer to seek traditional methods of healing rather than first attend the available health centers. This is according to Kimeu (2007) who asserts that the Munyoyaya people strongly believe in traditional medicine.

One famous traditional healer is Hassan Godana, who has helped many people suffering from various disease including ulcers and typhoid (Amin, 2006). He and other traditional healers have different ways of dealing with sicknesses and injuries. A wounded area, for instance, is burnt with a red hot rod so that pus will not accumulate on the area. Severe headache is treated using a hot stick that burns some spots around the head. Mutton tied around a deep cut or fracture is believed to reduce pain and heal the wound fast. Sharp objects like razor blades are also used to make marks on a swollen part of a body believing that as blood oozes from the injured part, the body is cleaning the injury. Ash is also believed to make bleeding cease from an injured part.

Maalim Sheikh acknowledges that they, as Islamic teachers, use the Qur’an to heal some major problems among the Munyoyaya people. He gave an example of

how to counteract the effects of witchcraft. This is done using some verses from the Qur’an like the verses that mention Pharaoh and Moses. Amina (2006) gave the example of her husband, Ishmael, who could not hear properly for a long time. He decided to seek for prayer by calling some sheikhs in his house. He slaughtered a goat for them and made a meal of rice. After they had eaten they prayed for him by reading some verses from the Qur’an for about one hour. Amina says that Ishamel could hear better than before the prayers. Possession by *ayaana* spirits is also considered as sickness (*duqub* in Munyoyaya language) by the Munyoyaya people and is treated in a specific way. A full discussion of this is given in the subsequent pages of this study that refers to the research questions posited herein.

Spirit Possession Cults and Women’s Participation

R.Q 1 How can the spirit possession cults among the Munyoyaya women be described?

- i. What are the different types of possessive spirits?
- ii. How can the cult sessions be described?

This subsection will describe how Munyoyaya women participate in the spirit possession cults in the Madogo location. This description will include an overview of the different types of spirits that possess the Munyoyaya women as well as a fuller discussion on the *ayaana* cult that is more prominent among them. A description of the cult sessions is also given according to the way the Munyoyaya women participate.

Possessive Spirits among the Munyoyaya Women

There are different types of spirits believed to possess the Munyoyaya women. Two broad categories of are: Muslim and non-Muslim spirits. Maimuna (2006) describes the Muslim spirits as those that tend to draw people towards Islamic ways,

for instance, demanding that one should pray during the five required times; the non-Muslim spirits drive people away from Islam. Jinn and *ruhani* are the Muslim spirits according to Maimuna (2006). *Ayaana* and *tairieni* spirits are non-Muslim spirits. A summary of the two categories of spirits is given below.

Table 7. Spirits among the Munyoyaya women

Name of spirit	Jinn	<i>Ruhani</i>	<i>Ayaana</i>	<i>Tairieni</i>
Origin	Arabia	Arabia	Asmara and Ethiopia	Pokomoland
Religion	Muslim	Muslim	Non-Muslim	Non-Muslim
Colour preference	White	White	Red	Red

Table 6 shows there are four different types of possessive spirits among the Munyoyaya women. These are: Jinn, *ruhani*, *ayaana* and *tairieni*. *Ruhani* and jinn are Islamic and can be dealt with using the Qur'an and other religious ways, according to Maimuna (2006). Being Islamic these two spirits prefer a white piece of cloth for the patient to be covered with. White color is said to symbolize the religious values of Islam, as Kim stipulates (2001, 289), this is also assumed to be the case among the Munyoyaya people.

Tairieni is a non-Muslim spirit that also possesses the Munyoyaya women in the Madogo location. Nyanya (Sinti's grandmother) (2006) points out that *tairieni* spirits mostly possess women from another local people group called Malakote, who are mostly found in a neighboring location called Mororo location, about two kilometres from the Madogo location. However, there are some Munyoyaya women who get possessed by the *tairieni* spirit Borushi (2006). Chief Adan (2006) explains that the *tairieni* spirit originated from the Pokomo people, who also reside on the lower part of Tana River.

The Munyoyaya people, according to Chief Adan (2006), saw some Pokomo people who had resettled in the Madogo location, treating the *tairieni* sickness and were attracted to it. They attended the sessions as observers and ended up getting possessed by the same. That is how *tairieni* spirit was introduced to the Munyoyaya people. The *tairieni* spirit speaks Kilwana, the language of the Malakote people. The practitioners who do not know the language do not deal with the spirit. Borushi confesses that he did not understand Kilwana, so he did not deal with the *tairieni* spirit. The other main difference between the *tairieni* and the *ayaana* spirits is in the way the *dibee* (Munyoyaya word for wooden drum) is beaten during the possession sessions. The beats for the *ayaana* sessions are faster than for the *tairieni* sessions. A fuller description of the *ayaana* spirits is given below since the Munyoyaya women are possessed more by the *ayaana* spirits than the others, as Amina (2006) explains.

Ayaana Possession Cult

This section presents a descriptive discussion of the *ayaana* possessive spirit by first locating it in its wider cultic context. A description of the concept of *ayaana* will be provided before considering the historicity of the cult. The *ayaana* possessive spirit will then be described including the practitioners who are involved in handling it in the Madogo location. A detailed description of the *ayaana* sessions is also given. All these will be given from the insider's (emic) perspective before analysis is done in a subsequent section.

The *ayaana* concept

The word *ayaana* and its derivatives seem to have different connotations in different contexts. In the northern Sudan, *ayāna* means a "sick woman" in the

context of the *Zar* cult, according to Boddy (1989, xv). This seems to be derived from the Arabic word for the sick, *eyaana*. It is also interesting to note that the Borana word that is used to translate “blessed” in the beatitudes, is *ayaana* (Lk 6:20-23, Mt 5:1-11). This researcher did not delve into the details of finding out this latter meaning in the context of the Borana Bible.

Traditionally, the word *ayaana* was used by the pastoral Borana people in Northern Kenya in relation to the traditional lunar calendar, as Dahl observes (1989, 153). Dahl also mentions of a different meaning of *ayaana* among the agricultural Oromo people of Ethiopia, who perceived *ayaana* to be:

A number category of the invisible, intangible spirit society which resembles that of the earthly Galla (/Oromo/). They are creations of Waaqa or Divinity. The Ayaana were given by Waaqa to the Galla as a special sign of his favor and to help them observe Galla law and customs which are also his gifts. They are believed to be ranked hierarchically... (Dahl 1989, 153, quoting Morton, A.L).

The Munyoyaya people also perceive the *ayaana* spirits as invisible and intangible. All the informants asserted that *ayaana* are spirits that cause many problems like sickness, mental retardation, bareness, miscarriages, stillbirths, and so forth. Therefore the *ayaana* spirits are referred to as *duqub* (Munyoyaya word for sickness) by the Munyoyaya people. When someone is afflicted by an *ayaana* spirit, he/she is said to have an *ayaana* sickness (*duqub ayaana*).

Origin of *ayaana* spirits

Borushi (2007) mentions that *ayaana* spirits originated from Asmara and went to Ethiopia before entering into Kenya through the northern parts. He also asserts that the *ayaana* spirit first ascended on Sheikh Hussein of Bale, who became the first practitioner of *ayaana*. He also founded the Hussainiya cult, where being an adherent

was considered as synonymous to being possessed by the *ayaana* spirits (Dahl 1989, 152).

The *ayaana* concept was thus originally non-Munyoyaya. Maimuna (2006) confirms this when she mentioned that *ayaana* spirits were brought by the Borana people who settled among the Munyoyaya along River Tana. They would “beat their drum” and the Munyoyaya people would go to watch and get possessed by the *ayaana* spirits. Borushi also confirms this and adds that the Munyoyaya people had previously been possessed by the *tairieni* spirit that was prominent among the Malakote people. They however found the *ayaana* sessions to exhibit more vigor and thus preferred to attend them. When the *ayaana* spirit was introduced to the Munyoyaya people, it preferred to possess the Muslims rather than the Christians who were in the area, according to Borushi. Hassan (2006) also confirms that the *ayaana* spirit does not possess Christians.

Different types of *ayaana*

The *ayaana* spirits among the Borana people are classified into different families. These include: *Dakiri*, *Amarenya*, *Fano*, *Arabiya* and the *Warra Kola* (Dahl 1989, 159). The Munyoyaya people also categorize *ayaana* spirits into various types. Some are believed to be Christian, and others Muslims. The table below illustrates the different types of *ayaana* spirits and their characteristics.

Table 8. Types of *ayaana* spirits among the Munyoyaya people

Name	Characteristic
<i>Janni</i>	Bad and troublesome
<i>Hajj Abdalla</i>	Good and quiet
<i>Hajj Risa</i>	Good and quiet
<i>Hajj Suleman</i>	Good

<i>Odha</i>	Good and quiet
<i>Maaritte</i>	Bad and troublesome
<i>Digo</i>	Bad because it asks for human blood
<i>Qaliti</i>	A female <i>ayaana</i> , very bad and makes a lot of noise and commotion

The table above shows that the Munyoyaya people acknowledge that good *ayaana* spirits have some Islamic aspects hence the prefix *Hajj*, which is used to denote a person who has been on pilgrimage to Mecca. There are some female *ayaana* spirits like *Qaliti*. This one is known to be a bad one and quite ferocious, according to Hassan (2006). *Janni* is also a bad type of *ayaana* since it affects the reproductive system of the women. The *Digo* type is bad as it demands human blood- tantamount to desiring human sacrifice. Maimuna further asserts that it is crucial for each *ayaana* practitioner to know the type of *ayaana* he is dealing with. This is mainly because each *ayaana* spirit has its own songs that excite it. Failure to sing the right song would imply that the *ayaana* is not satisfied hence will continue to torment its victim.

Some characteristics of *ayaana* spirits

Hadike (2006) explains that *ayaana* spirits do not like the reading of the Qur'an in their presence. This is confirmed by Maimuna (2006), who further asserts that *ayaana* spirits tend to hide themselves in the possessed person and will not come out if the Qur'an is read. Hence, one continues to be afflicted and eventually dies.

According to Borushi (2006) the *ayaana* spirits do not like their victims going to the hospital for treatment or even taking medicine prescribed by the medical practitioners. Hadike reports that anyone who becomes afflicted by *ayaana* spirits and falls sick is advised not to go to hospital. He or she might be given an injection as treatment but will only become unconscious.

Table 6 above shows that *ayaana* spirits have a preference for the red color. This is confirmed by a number of the informants, who assert that any patient under treatment is covered with a red piece of cloth as she/he inhales the incense. All the *ayaana* practitioners who have qualified as *waganga* (practitioners) must have a red piece of cloth. Borushi showed this researcher the red cloth that covered the *ayaana* stick on which a long chain was suspended.

Ayaana spirits do not die, states Hassan (2006). When a possessed person dies the *ayaana* can attempt to entersomebody else. They are also not inheritable in terms of passing to another person of the same family. However, this does not exempt members of the same family from being possessed. Anger, especially, is an opening through which one can easily be injected (Swahili: *kudungwa*) by the *ayaana* spirit.

Ayaana practitioners

Ayaana practitioners in the Madogo location are commonly referred to as *mafundi* (Swahili word for practitioners). Chief Adan (2006) gave this researcher a list of the *ayaana* practitioners and their assistants as below.

Table 9. List of *ayaana* practitioners in the Madogo location

Name	Female/male (F/M)	Tribal group
Hake	M	Borana
Borushi	M	Borana
Hassan (<i>abba serra</i>)	M	Orma
Amina (assisting, not a full practitioner)	F	Orma
Aguye	M	Orma
Bonto (assisting, not a full practitioner)	F	Munyoyaya
Saumu (in training still)	F	Munyoyaya

The first three, Hake, Borushi, and Hassan are real practitioners who have been authorized to treat people. The rest are assistants who are still under

apprenticeship and thus cannot be called *mafundi* as Chief Adan explains. Of all these *ayaana* practitioners in the Madogo location, Hassan is the most senior. He is referred to as the *abba sera* (senior leader) even though he is only twenty nine years old according to Mahmud (2006). Yet he has garnered a lot of respect as this researcher realized during the interviews with the Munyoyaya people. Many referred to him as an honest man who “knows his job well”. His profile will be given below.

Borushi is another respected practitioner in the Madogo location. He is a Borana, as the table above shows. He was keen to mention that there are no Munyoyaya *mafundi* of *ayaana*. Therefore he has decided to teach them since “Munyoyaya people have a lot of *ayaana*” according to him. Borushi is originally from Garbatulla area, in Isiolo District of Kenya. Many people had died including his mother, before the cure for *ayaana* was discovered. This incidence made him decide to become a practitioner so that he could assist people. Thus he traveled to Moyale in the northern part of Kenya to be apprenticed to an elderly man. Moyale is a town that borders Ethiopia where *ayaana* is said to have come through. He learnt the different *dawa* (Swahili word for medicine) for treating *ayaana* cases, which he uses to treat the Munyoyaya people. He either treats people in their homes or in his own compound if it is a serious illness.

Borushi was quick to add that it was God who gave him the power to heal people as many have found relief through him. He has been a practitioner for fourteen years now. He has been able to raise his children well and has even taken them to school. His income is solely from his work as a practitioner. His charges range from two thousand to ten thousand Kenyan shillings. Borushi showed this researcher some of the medicine he used in treating *ayaana* cases. These include: a bird’s nest, hyena’s dried excreta, some roots of plants, coffee (*bunna* in Borana language) and different

herbs that he uses for different *ayaana* spirits. He also displayed some of the paraphernalia used for the *ayaana* sessions, which include: a used flywhisk, a long metallic chain, a y-shaped stick and a red cloth covering the chain fixed on the y-shaped stick. This y-shaped stick is of particular importance as it designates one as a full practitioner of *ayaana*, according to Borushi. It is the *ayaana* stick that is supposed to be “dressed” with the red cloth, and also to be smeared with oil. This consent with what Dahl (1989, 161) says about the stick among the Borana people. She asserts that the stick “has a right to have clothes, particularly a red head cloth, red being ‘the color of God’. The stick should be anointed with fats as a sign of respect to Sheikh Hussain.” Apparently, the connection with Sheikh Hussein of Bale is that a y-shaped stick was handed down to Sheikh Hussain from Moses through Prophet Muhammad (ibid.).

Hassan is another *ayaana* practitioner in the Madogo location. He is only twenty-nine years old yet he is the most senior of the *ayaana* practitioners in the Madogo location; he is referred to as the *Abba Sera* meaning the “chief leader”. He was apprenticed to an old man who had chosen him when he was still very young. Hassan would beat the drum for the old man as he taught him the different types of medicines (*dawa*) useful for treatment. When he became competent to treat people, the old man gave him his permission.

Like Borushi’s case above, Hassan’s mother died of an illness related to *ayaana* spirits. This prompted Hassan to have an interest in knowing more about *ayaana* spirits and their treatment. He was sick at some point in 1980, when he was treated by an *ayaana* practitioner. This also became his path towards expertise in controlling *ayaana* spirits. He also has an assistant who helps him especially when he is not available.

Participation of Munyoyaya Women as Practitioners

The list of *ayaana* practitioners above shows that there are Munyoyaya women who participate in the *ayaana* cults as practitioners. However, these women are not full practitioners (*mafundi*) as Maimuna and Saumu acknowledge. They belong to a lower rank than the *fundi* and thus cannot beat the drum. They are still under apprenticeship. This researcher was able to interview one of these Munyoyaya women, Saumu, to find out how she got involved in the *ayaana* cult. This is how Saumu narrated her own story:

I started looking after goats when I was only eight years old. Every time I would take the goats out to the bush together with other children, I would entertain them by singing the songs sung during the night sessions, and try to imitate the way possessed people behaved. I was frequently warned that I could be possessed by the *ayaana* if I continued singing the songs and imitating. I did not care. All I knew is that I enjoyed singing the songs as I used to attend many of the night sessions when *ayaana* was being sung for.

One day I started feeling sickly and I would be very thirsty. My mouth became very dry and I felt a very strong urge to take coffee (*bunna*). This desire for coffee went on for many days. At one point, I fell as I drew water from a water point and injured my head. Another time, I became unconscious. When I later woke up, people around claimed that I had been hit by *ayaana*, but I objected- I was still young, though later I started vomiting blood. I was rushed to a hospital, but no sickness was found. I was taken to a *fundi* (practitioner), who said that I had *ayaana*. This was again diagnosed when I fell and broke my hand. Again the *fundi* (practitioner) was called in to request the *ayaana* to restore my hand. The *ayaana* was also requested to cease disturbing me until after I got married.

After I got married, I became sick again. The same *fundi* (practitioner) came again and advised me to appease the *ayaana*. The *ayaana* made a lot of demands on my husband. It required the following: a sheep, its liver, heart, kidney and tongue, perfume, coffee, frankincense (*lubadin*) and incense (*udi*). A day was set when all these would be presented to the *ayaana*. All the possessed people were invited to drink coffee and eat the meat from the slaughtered sheep. On this day, a number of people turned up and the sheep was slaughtered and the sessions went on well.

After this, I became a more regular participant of the *ayaana* sessions, and I was even apprenticed to a well known *fundi* in Mulanjo. I have to pay three thousand Kenyan shillings to learn the different kinds of herbal medicine used for treatment.

Saumu's story is confirmed by Sinti (Saumu's sister) and her grandmother, Nyanya (2006), who reports that Saumu had become very sick at one point before she

got married. They tried all remedies especially seeking for medical attention, yet these never improved her condition. It was until the "drums were beaten" for her that the *ayaana* spirit agreed to release Saumu from the sickness. After she was married, Sinti narrated how Saumu was again "beaten for the drum", and this time she became "very possessed" and even drank raw blood "until she was satisfied" and ate the raw liver of the sheep that was slaughtered. From that time Saumu also started to learn how to treat *ayaana*-related problems. Nyanya (2006) also adds that Saumu has an *ayaana* chain and a red piece of cloth. She is thus recognized by the people of the Madogo location as an upcoming practitioner.

When this researcher interviewed Saumu about being a practitioner, she affirms that she longs to be a full *fundi* (practitioner). She says that this would give her the money she desperately needed. (This researcher actually found Saumu hungry. Her children had gone to school on empty stomachs). Saumu explains that her husband was away in Mulanjo, a neighboring village, where he had gone to burn charcoal. He had only left a few coins which were used to buy some necessities. Saumu thought she would supplement what her husband got when she would become a full practitioner. However, Saumu confessed that her husband had not given her his consent to be a full practitioner. He argued that as a practitioner, Saumu would be required to hold *ayaana* sessions for people at night and there would be a lot of noise. Furthermore, it would be un-Islamic for men and women to mix together as they do during the sessions. Yet in spite of these setbacks, Saumu still attends the sessions and offers her services when required. She is able to communicate with *ayaana*, as Sinti reports; hence, she can know the requirements needed. Saumu attends these sessions when her husband is away burning charcoal for a week or two.

Participation of Munyoyaya Women as Patients

Hadike (2006) has witnessed many patients seeking for treatment from her husband, Hake, the Borana practitioner also found in the Madogo location. She asserts that *ayaana* attacks all people: men, women and children regardless of age. This is confirmed by other informants like Borushi, whose patients include both men and women, though there are more of the latter. Hassan also admits that “80% of all my patients are women, both married and unmarried.” The following reasons were given for the larger number of women patients in the *ayaana* sessions:

1. Chief Adan (2006) reports that there are generally more women in the Madogo location than men, thus there would definitely be more women patients.
2. Omar (2006) asserts that women are more afflicted by *ayaana* because women like to go and witness the sessions. They get possessed as they watch the *ayaana* rituals being performed.
3. Al-Amin (2006) reasons that many Munyoyaya women are not religious, they do not observe the five times of ritual prayers. This makes them very vulnerable to *ayaana* attacks more than men, who try to pray. This observation was shared by Maalim Sheikh (2006) who observes that Munyoyaya women were not keen on religion as they did not pray as required. They prefer to go to the *ayaana* sessions and thus become “slaves” of *ayaana*.
4. Amin (2006) classifies *ayaana* as a “sickness of women”. Thus it is prone to prefer women than men.
5. Hassan (2006) asserts that women have more problems than men. He admits that most of the patients are women who have fertility problems.
6. Hassan (2006) also admits that women are people of anger (*hasira*). When they quarrel they can easily pass the *ayaana* spirit to each other out of anger.

7. Hassan further explains that small children can easily get *ayaana* from their possessed mothers through breast feeding.

Different reasons are given by the Munyoyaya people for the larger number of women as participants of the *ayaana* sessions. It is apparent that the Munyoyaya people relate *ayaana* spirits more to women than to men. Below are accounts of how some of these women participate in the sessions as patients.

1). Hadiya (2006)

Hadiya is Mahammad’s (2006) wife. According to him, Hadiya has had many problems including inability to give birth. But the particular concern that made him call for Hassan (2006), the practitioner, was when her jaws were dislocated. According to Hadiya, she only yawned once one day and her jaws refused to return to the normal position. Her teeth even loosened from the gum and she could hardly eat. When Hassan the practitioner was consulted, he immediately discerned that the *ayaana* spirit had attacked her. Her only remedy was to use the medicine (*dawa*) he was going to prescribe and probably beat the drum for her. But first Mahammad was required to buy some things and give to Hassan. He did not disclose to this researcher what they were, but he mentioned they were costly, considering that he was only a casual worker. Hassan then proceeded to treat her for seven days with the herbal medicine he had prescribed. After the seven days, he beat the drum for Hadiya for seven more days. After this the cloth that was used to tie her jaws was removed, and Hassan said there was remarkable improvement as the jaw had returned to its position. This testimony was confirmed by Omar, who reports that Mahammad’s wife got well after a week of beating the drum.

2). Hadiya's baby

Hassan reported that Hadiya later got a baby but this baby got the sickness of *ayaana* from her mother. This baby thus became Hassan's patient and had to undergo some treatment even though the drum was not beaten for her.

3). Nuru

Nuru is Maimuna's (2006) daughter. She was seven years old when this researcher interviewed Maimuna. Nuru attends a local nursery school run by Christians. Nuru's teacher, Charity, was interviewed by this researcher, who wanted to find out how Nuru behaved in School. She reports that Nuru sometimes acted weirdly like staring in class as though her mind was elsewhere. Sometimes she would be asked a question by the teacher and she would not answer at all. This researcher was prompted to enquire about Nuru because her mother Maimuna had mentioned that Nuru has an *ayaana* spirit. She discovered that her daughter was possessed. Nuru ate food and but she was always thin and weakly. Maimuna took Nuru to Borushi, who diagnosed that she was possessed by an *ayaana* spirit. It however would manifest itself in her adulthood.

Maimuna says that her daughter became "injected" by her paternal grandmother after she had quarreled with Maimuna when Nuru was only a month old. She asserts that she could not get the *ayaana* since she had been "shielded by the Qur'an being read for her"; meaning that she had been protected from any *ayaana* attack by having someone read to her the protective verses from the Qur'an. Nuru did not have this protection hence she became a target. The *ayaana* spirit would only be dealt with appropriately after Nuru gets married. Meanwhile, Borushi would merely try to convince it to leave Nuru alone for a time.

4). Rukiwa (2006)

Rukiwa was a Form four candidate at a local secondary school when this researcher interviewed her. She was a single mother of six months old boy. Rukia's trouble started when she was in her primary school. She had been performing very well. One of her classmates had not been pleased with her performance. Rukia suspected that she had been behind the disappearance of one of her exercise books from her desk in school. When the book had gone missing, Rukiwa had started to have fainting spells in school and at home. She had been taken to a local *fundi* (practitioner) but had not improved. She had been in touch with some missionaries in her village, and after some time, she had become a Christian. She had been enrolled in a Christian primary school in the Madogo location, where her fainting spells had still persisted in spite of many prayers. Her mother had decided to take her to Borushi for treatment one day after she had fainted for a long time. During the sessions some Christians who had accompanied her also prayed as Borushi proceeded on with his work. Rukiwa asserts that nothing had happened to her. The *ayaana* spirit had not manifested itself, nether had she regained consciousness until she was taken back home.

5). Aruki (2006).

Every time Aruki became pregnant her hair would start to fall off especially from the middle part of her head. A practitioner, who was treating her sister, informed her that she had *ayaana* hence the hair loss. Aruki did not concede to this diagnosis, and refused the recommended treatment. She instead bought some medicine from the chemist, which seemed to remedy her situation. Nothing has happened to her when she refused the advice of the practitioner.

Aruki's son, who was five years old, had started diarrhea for a long time. He was also diagnosed with an *ayaana* spirit. Aruki had previously taken him to many medical centers including Kenyatta National Hospital and nothing wrong was found. After the diagnosis for *ayaana*, Aruki was advised to hold the *ayaana* session for the boy so that the spirit would stop disturbing him. Aruki refused. According to her, *ayaana* is "not real but a cultural belief as well as a business where people extort money from innocent people". Her son was, however, healed in spite of not beating the drum.

6). Aruki's sister 1

Aruki above narrates how her sister was diagnosed with an *ayaana* spirit. She had gotten married as a second wife and she was not happy with the marriage. Her husband would be absent for a prolonged period. Aruki's sister would often complain of her husband's absence and she actually became sick. She was diagnosed with having an *ayaana* spirit and was required to get the appropriate treatment. She had the drum beaten for her and she became well, according to Aruki.

7). Aruki's sister 2

Aruki also recounts the story of a second sister who was diagnosed with an *ayaana* spirit. She had become very sick yet nothing was found wrong in her body when she had been checked at the hospital. The x-ray revealed nothing. When she had been taken back home (she could not walk on her own), people suggested that she had an *ayaana* spirit. A practitioner came who diagnosed the same. He arranged a day of beating the drum for her. When the day came, Aruki's sister heard the drum beats while in the sick bed she had been confined to. She got out of bed and ran to the people beating drum. This amazed people according to Aruki because everyone knew she could not get out of bed. The *ayaana* spirit spoke through the practitioner and

demanded a number of things such as, a goat, red cloth, and food. Aruki contributed to the purchase of these things even though she does not believe in *ayaana*.

8). Ummi

Ummi (2006) narrates how at some point she had been gravely sick and confined to bed. She had been diagnosed as having an *ayaana* spirit thus had expected to be beaten for the drum. She, however, had a craving for dry chapati and the blood of a certain goat. This was a goat she particularly liked, and when she would hear it bleat, she would start craving for its blood as she scratched herself. The goat had to be kept in a neighboring compound until the time it was slaughtered. After it was slaughtered, she went straight for its blood and drank it until she was satisfied. When she came back to her senses, she felt very bashful since blood was still on her mouth.

9). Fatuma

Fatuma (2006) was the elder sister of Ayub (2006). She explains that she was divorced and has not been "taken" (married) by anyone. She had an *ayaana* spirit which made her unconscious for a long period of time. Ayub said that their parents usually called Borushi when Fatuma becomes unconscious. He did some rituals until she would finally wake up. Ayub's mother did not have an *ayaana* spirit.

Ayaana sessions

Ayaana sessions are held in various stages and for a number of days depending on the intensity of the problem. Different localities among the Munyoyaya people also tend to do things differently. Yet a basic pattern is followed, which starts with diagnosis, then identification and communication, and finally fulfillment of the promise. Each of these will be discussed below according to what this researcher observed and was told by the participants.

- Diagnosis

Hadike recounts how her husband, Hake, was able to diagnose whether someone has an *ayaana* spirit or not. He does this by putting some *lubadin* (frankincense) inside a small container called *idhina* (Munyoyaya word for clay incense burner). He is able to tell from the smoke if the patient has an *ayaana* spirit or not. If one is diagnosed as having an *ayaana* spirit, the practitioner involved must go to the Chief Adan to request for the permit to beat drum at night if the patient consents. This is a requirement from the government as represented by the Area Chiefs and the Divisional officer. When the permit is given, the family members of the patient are informed and the place for beating the drum prepared. Every practitioner has his territory within which he operates and where his patients come from. Chief Adan further explains that none of these *ayaana* practitioners would invade the other's territory.

- Beginning phase

People begin streaming into the compound where the session would be carried out in the early part of the evening at around six. This researcher attended a session in the Madogo location where Hassan was to beat the drum for a sick person. The patient was a young man of twenty five years. He had become insane suddenly and Hassan had diagnosed it as an attack from an *ayaana* spirit. Hassan explained that the family of this young man had previously refused anything to do with the *ayaana* sessions since they were people of *dini* (Swahili word for religion). They only accepted that the young man be treated by the *ayaana* practitioner when the Islamic leaders failed to address the situation using the Qur'an.

The session began at around eight thirty in the evening when the drum beaters (*songora* in Munyoyaya language) started sounding the drums. These were not real

drums, but yellow jerricans that had previously contained cooking oil. These drums were hit several times with sticks in a rhythmic way as people surrounded the drum-beaters and danced. The participants were both men and women though the latter were more in number. There were also children of approximately ten years of age who participated in the singing. One particular child was keen on dancing and would dash forward as she saw the other participants do. Chief Adan had earlier mentioned that he had attended some sessions and found some small girls participating. He had chased them away since they were supposed to go to school the following morning. They seem to enjoy watching and participating in the dance and that is why they could still attend. The singing was done by both men and women, though it was the men who were leading the songs as women echoed. The songs were mainly lengthy repetitions of one sentence, and the name "Sheikh Hussein" could be heard distinctly. The song was something like: *Marmar Sheikh Hussein* (Surround here Sheikh Hussein), which is meant to invoke the presence of Sheikh Hussein in the *ayaana* session. The songs were neither in the Munyoyaya language, nor in Orma. Hassan had previously explained that the songs were in a language of *ayaana* spirits which he had been taught by his tutor.

- Identification

The singing, clapping and dancing was meant to continue until some participants entered into a state of trance. This was attained when they started groaning at intervals while they surged forward to where the drum beaters were. Incense continued to burn around the drumming place as participants danced. This researcher noticed that they did not have shoes on. The explanation given was that the *ayaana* spirits do not like dirty places and people. Shoes represent dirt and thus must

be removed. Any person who has not performed the cleansing ritual after a sexual act would be identified by the *ayaana* spirits and be embarrassed in front of people.

The practitioner was keen on the patient and watched him closely. He passed the flywhisk over his body as he chanted some words. Meanwhile, more participants, especially women, entered into trance and started to sway from side to side as though they would fall down. Hassan, the practitioner did not seem to be in a trance. He had earlier mentioned that his *ayaana* spirit did not ascend anyhow to make him go into the trance stage. Many times he would be in his normal state and be able to communicate with the *ayaana* spirit in the patient. Omar, however, mentions that Hassan's *ayaana* spirit sometimes ascended and made his face to change. If someone called him by his name, Hassan, he would not respond. He only responded when called Ababasho, Hassan's name during the sessions.

As the drumming intensified and participants got into a trance, the patient was then covered with a piece of cloth. This researcher could not make out the color of the cloth since it was dark. The practitioner then proceeded to communicate with the *ayaana* spirit so as to ascertain its identity. The *ayaana* spirit would only speak out if it has been pleased with the songs and drumming presented on its behalf. Yet before this identification Hassan explains that the patient was tested if he was truly possessed or not. Live coal was put on the patient's hand or head and he was not supposed to burn. Some patients would even eat the live coals, as Hassan explained. A number of informants mentioned that they have witnessed that possessed people picked the live coal and ate it without being burnt at all. Other manifestations included drinking up to eighteen cups of hot, sugarless black coffee or five liters of water at once. Some even drank whole bottles of perfume or walked on fire on their knees. In this state, the

patient hardly recognized anybody. He only communicated with the practitioner in the language understood by them.

The *ayaana* was asked to identify itself through the patient. The nice smell from the burning incense together with the singing was meant to arouse the spirit and please it so that it would speak out. After it identified itself it was then asked what the problem was, why it was making the patient to suffer. It was asked what it wanted so that it could be happy. According to Hassan, the *ayaana* spirit asked for things including alcohol. Hassan explained to the *ayaana* spirit that they are Muslims and cannot therefore touch alcohol; he asked it if it could accept a bottle of coke instead. Sometimes the *ayaana* spirit can be very troublesome, according to Hassan. It can refuse to cooperate with the practitioner and even throw the patient to the ground and make him/her shake. Sometimes it issues threats of killing the patient because its rights have not been fulfilled. Hassan explains that some *ayaana* spirits are good and quiet and will easily cooperate with the practitioner. Others are virtually ferocious and uncooperative. These latter types get some forms of punishment, which they do not like. Hassan narrates that this can be in the form of a type of incense that the *ayaana* spirit does not appreciate, hence forcing it to identify itself.

- Fulfilling the requirements

After the *ayaana* spirit has identified itself and what it wants, the next step is to fulfill the requirements. Hassan reports that "*ayaana* spirits have a right of getting what they demand so that there can be peace". A certain period of time is set for the concerned people to look for the things demanded by the *ayaana* spirit. If this period exceeds and nothing is given, then *vita* (Swahili word for war) ensues. Hassan further elaborates how many girls get *ayaana* spiritits when unmarried. The *ayaana* spirits are however told to wait until the girls are married since their fathers cannot give the

ayaana's demands. Peace reigns for some time as long as the girls are unmarried.

Hassan explains that:

Immediately the girls put on the black head scarf (*hagoogoo*) to signify they are married, trouble begins. The new bridegroom sees his new wife roar like a lion, and knows something must be done. If he is wise and concerned, he makes the arrangements for the *ayaana* sessions in order to know what the *ayaana* requires. He has to fulfill all these if he wants peace.

The session to fulfill the demands basically followed the same initial procedure of invoking the *ayaana* spirits by drumming, singing, dancing and fumigating the session area with incense and frankincense. The patient was also fumigated with frankincense while covered with a red cloth as he/she sat on the floor. The practitioner then picked a handful of grass and put it in front of the patient. He asked the *ayaana* spirit if it had accepted it. The *ayaana* spirit then responded by confirming in the name of Allah and Muhammad and sometimes nodded the head in agreement. It was then told that the things it required had been brought. It responded affirmatively by nodding the head. The sheep (usually a common demand) was slaughtered and the *ayaana* spirit given the raw blood to drink. Hassan explains that sometimes the *ayaana* spirit would yearn for raw meat and it would be given immediately. The rest of the meat was to be cooked the following day.

The *ayaana* spirit asked for *kahawa chungu* (Swahili meaning coffee without sugar). This was taken in large quantities of up to ten liters as this researcher was told. It was explained that it is not the patient taking such a large amount of coffee, it was the *ayaana* spirit in the possessed person. The other participants also drank coffee that was generously offered. The *ayaana* spirit was made to promise to give the patient peace since it was satisfied. It chose to leave although it did not leave peacefully. Hassan asserts that the patient had become ecstatic towards the end of the

session. This, according to Hassan, was a good sign that the spirit would want to leave the patient in peace.

In other sessions, the *ayaana* spirits would demand that they only accept to "leave through a young girl". One informant mentions how a spirit that had possessed a young man requested to enter his younger sister before the conclusion of the session. This sister was called and made to sit down in the middle of a circle formed by the participants. Her possessed brother made circular movements around her as he touched her and made some utterances in the *ayaana* language. He did this three times and the last time the sister started shaking as though she was also possessed. Meanwhile, the *ayaana* spirit in the young man calmed down and he is reported to have gone slowly and slept outside a house as the sister continued being ecstatic. All these sessions depend on the intensity of the problem. Mahammad's (2006) wife, for example, had to undergo two other stages of the session on top of the seven days of beating the drum. Her case seemed to be serious, and Mahammad lamented that it was very costly for him.

Participation of Munyoyaya Women as Observers

According to Rukim (2006), many women in the Madogo location enjoyed attending the *ayaana* sessions to dance and clap. These may attend merely for entertainment as Rukim explains. Chief Adan also confirms that many Munyoyaya women are attracted by the drum beats and find themselves going to dance. This researcher also noticed a number of women during the session she attended, who kept a distance and merely watched the proceedings. Some of the women who were dancing and clapping would occasionally fall into trance and start behaving in a manner unlike them. Some of these were the regular members who had an obligation

to attend the sessions when called for. Their presence was required in order to keep the *ayaana* spirits satisfied with the consistent singing and dancing. Kimeu (2007) observed an *ayaana* session and comments that some of the women who participated in that session went to show their gratitude. They had been sick and had been healed through the *ayaana* sessions performed by the particular practitioner. They therefore felt the obligation of attending the sessions in order to show their gratitude to the practitioner. These are the ones who also got to the trance stage as they sung and danced.

Summary

This first research question has facilitated descriptive details that give a better understanding of the phenomenon of spirit possession as practiced by the Munyoyaya women of the Madogo location. It has revealed that there are different types of possessive spirits though the *ayaana* spirit is the most prevalent. Some details about the *ayaana* spirits are given, which reveals that they originated from the Borana people. The description of the practitioners involved with the *ayaana* spirits shows that two of these practitioners are from the Borana tribe. There are no Munyoyaya women who are full practitioners, they are still under apprenticeship. The practitioners are able to communicate with the *ayaana* spirits in the possessed people by trying to find out what they require in order to be satisfied and stop tormenting their victims. These victims are not only women; men and children are also inflicted by the *ayaana* spirits. However, women are majority of the victims who participate in the sessions as practitioners, patients or observers. An outline of nine patients of the *ayaana* sessions shows that the *ayaana* sessions are perceived to be therapeutic in that most cases dealt with concern physical maladies like in the case of Hadiya, Aruki,

Aruki's sisters and Ummi. Jealousy and anger are attributive factors of passing on the *ayaana* spirits to others.

The *ayaana* sessions are quite eventful. Songs are sung that are appropriate for the particular spirit that has to be identified by the practitioner at hand. Communication between the practitioner and the spirit is meant to find out why it afflicts its victim with trouble. It demands certain items in order to be appeased.

Roles and Factors Contributing to Participation in Possession Cults

R.Q 2. What are the factors that contribute to the Munyoyaya women's participation in the possession cult?

- i. What are the societal roles and status of the Munyoyaya women?
- ii. What are the reasons for attending the possession sessions?

This section attempts to answer research question two above that seeks to consider the contributive factors of the Munyoyaya women's participation in the possession sessions. The society roles and status of the Munyoyaya women are examined herein in order to relate any socio-cultural aspects with the participation in the *ayaana* possession sessions. This is also deemed necessary in responding to Lewis' theory of deprivation which is grounded in socio-economical factors. This section will culminate by giving the factors that contribute to the women's participation.

Societal Roles of Munyoyaya Women

The societal roles examined in this section refer to the general responsibilities that the women have assumed over time. These roles are taken up tacitly since they were not initially their responsibilities. They have been forced to take such responsibilities for the sake of surviving.

Economic Role

Aruki (2006) asserts that the economic role of the Munyoyaya women in the Madogo location has greatly changed. Previously, they had to depend totally on their husbands to bring in money for food and other essentials. This was a requirement stipulated in Islam that required Muslim women to be secluded in their houses and not to be seen walking or working around, as Aruki asserts. She further explains that generally Munyoyaya women bore the consequences of their husbands' polygamous stance. They were not able to equally sustain all the women they married together with their children. Aruki also reports that many Munyoyaya men formed a habit of buying *miraa* (*khat*) to chew with the little money they got.

The Munyoyaya women took it as an obligation upon themselves to engage in income-generating projects when money from their husbands was not forthcoming. They have started small businesses like selling vegetables and fruits along the roads in the Madogo location since they can not afford to build or rent shop-buildings. Many of them walk to Garissa town, a distance of about two kilometers from the Madogo location. They go there to wash clothes for the rich Arabs and Somalis, who then give them money in return. They can earn between a hundred and two hundred Kenyan shillings per washing. Some of the more educated Munyoyaya women take up professional jobs like Aruki (2006), a laboratory assistant at the local secondary school. This researcher was surprised to see a Munyoyaya woman driving a public transport vehicle (*matatu*) plying the Garissa- Madogo road. There are other women who have ventured into irrigation farming along the Tana River, where they harvest produce and sell it in Garissa town. A number of Munyoyaya women have teamed up to form groups where they contribute money every month. Each of them has a chance of getting the collected money; a scheme called *ayuta* (Munyoyaya word meaning

“merry-go-round”), according to Aruki. Saumu (2006) was noted elsewhere as having mentioned of her desire to be a full practitioner (*fundi*) so that she could earn some money and support her family. All these are examples of the way the Munyoyaya women have assumed the economical role that was not initially designated to them. They have been forced by circumstances to be breadwinners.

Religious Role

Maimuna (2006) was keen to leave this researcher's house after the interview session with her. She did not want the minaret call for prayer to be sounded and she was found in an inappropriate place for prayer. This gives the impression that the Munyoyaya women are keen adherents of Islam. This however was not the case as this researcher later observed. Generally the Munyoyaya women are not keen in observing the five times of ritual prayer (*salat*). This was confirmed by Maalim Sheikh as mentioned elsewhere in this study. According to him, the Munyoyaya women are not very keen on religion per se, “they spend most of their energy on non-religious events like Sufism and *ayaana* rituals. These rituals are mostly held at night, so when are they able to observe the other religious duties when they would be so drowsy during the day?” laments Maalim Sheikh. Chief Adan also expresses his concern about Munyoyaya women. They were not able to pray since they would keep vigil through the night chewing *miraa* (*khat*), and thus cannot be fully sober to observe the religious requirements.

The Ramadhan month of fasting started on 24th September up to 23rd October 2006. During this time, this researcher was collecting data in the Madogo location, and she was keen to observe how the Munyoyaya women fasted. There was jubilation on the eve of 23rd October before the fast started. The women appeared to be in a

celebratory mood. The reason for this was that all Muslims must welcome the Ramadhan month with eagerness and joy. When the fast commenced on 23rd October, this researcher walked around the shopping center and observed a somber mood as people felt the pangs of hunger. Many of the Munyoyaya women seemed to be diligently observing the fast. They also had to purchase food and drinks to be taken when breaking the fast.

This researcher asked Maimuna and how she felt about the fast. She responded that the fast was not very enjoyable especially during the first days when one experiences a lot of hunger. Maimuna also explains how she had to miss the previous Ramadhan fast since she had just given birth to Amin, her third-born son. She was required to compensate for the missed days by fasting alone or together with her husband. She would fast for fifteen days and then her husband would fast for her the rest of the fifteen days. Maimuna said that her husband refused to fast for her because it would mean having to request for another leave from his work place (he is a policeman). For Maimuna, fasting alone when others were eating proved to be a formidable task which she was unable to accomplish. She resigned herself to Allah by asserting that: "Let God be my judge. He will forgive me because I was not able to fast, neither was I able to feed the sixty poor people as required by Islam. Getting sixty people is not easy in Madogo. Who would accept food anyhow?"

This researcher was interested to know if there were any Munyoyaya women who were involved in a leadership position in religious matters. Maalim Sheikh responded that there were no women involved. He said that women could not even lead people in prayer because their voices could easily entice men into sin. Men apparently have weak hearts and there are particular men with a "sickness of women".

When they hear a woman's voice, they could easily fall into sin even by imaginations. Women should therefore be quiet where religious matters are involved.

Family Role

Khan mentions that the activities of Muslim women are centered on "house keeping, family requirements, management of all affairs at home, looking after the children-all are woman's responsibility" (2003, 88). This seems to affirm what the Munyoyaya women have been enculturated to know as their role in the family once they get married. Umami proudly asserts that Munyoyaya women take care of their families by ensuring there is food for their husbands and children. It is usually the husband's role to care for his family economically, but he often uses up the money in buying miraa (a stimulant). This is one of the serious social factors that often sadden the Munyoyaya wives. Elsewhere in this paper Saumu was reported as having a desire to be a practitioner (*fundi*) of *ayaana* so that she could earn money and take care of her family. Her husband would use almost all the money he earned after selling charcoal, to buy *miraa*, which he would chew for a whole week. Thus providing for the family is a role that many Munyoyaya women have assumed after a lot of suffering.

The Munyoyaya women are also faced with another familial responsibility of trying to keep the family together. This specifically involves safeguarding their husbands from being snatched by other younger and beautiful women. This researcher witnessed a fight of fists between two Munyoyaya women who claimed to be fighting for one husband. One woman claimed that the other was snatching the husband from her and the children since he was not providing the financial assistance for her. A number of the Munyoyaya women interviewed confessed that they would not like to

have a co-wife or be divorced. For those who had been married as second wives, life had not been very easy as Ummi notes. There had been many quarrels, rivalry, hatred, jealous, and so forth. This made the Munyoyaya women resort to witchcraft in order to ensure that their husbands did not engage in extramarital affairs. One Munyoyaya woman confessed that she had even put love-charms in her husband's tea so that he could love her alone. Maimuna's husband works in Kajiado, far away from the family. This researcher asked her what she did to ensure her husband would not be unfaithful. She deplored, "I leave him to God although I have to make frequent trips to his place of work."

The Munyoyaya women generally give birth to many children. They reason that it is God who gives them children and believe that he will take care of them. "He knows what they will eat and dress, hence there is no need for family planning" said Saumu, who already has six children. She is only in her late-twenties. However, for some Munyoyaya women who are relatively educated, family planning is an option they have resorted to even without their husbands' knowledge. Aruki and Maimuna are among the few Munyoyaya women with few children. Aruki has four and Maimuna has three children. For other Munyoyaya who have many children, discipline is a big issue. This researcher witnessed how Munyoyaya children responded rudely to their mothers and even refused to be sent on errands until they were thoroughly punished. Many Munyoyaya women would throw abusive words to their children, who retaliate by repeating the same words to their mothers. Saumu once commented to this researcher, "I'm tired of these children. They go the *madrasa* (Islamic schools), yet they are so undisciplined." Saumu has even given two of her children to her grandmother to help her take care of them. This apparently is a

common practice among the Munyoyaya people, where children are given away to relatives. Saumu herself was raised up by her grandmother.

The Munyoyaya women take up family responsibilities at a very early age. They are married off as soon as they begin menstruating, approximately thirteen years old. Government officials like Chief Adan have tried to tell them to stop early child marriages, but this does not cease. Often times, the ages of the girls are concealed for the wedding to proceed. Early marriages have bitter consequences especially because the girls are not mature enough to handle familial roles. Divorce rates among the Munyoyaya people are common, according to Kimeu, which traumatizes the young Munyoyaya women at a tender age.

Social-cultural Role

The Munyoyaya women are very keen participants of socio-cultural events like weddings, circumcision ceremonies, childbirth ceremonies, and the like. Women are often the majority in such events where they attend in large numbers. They are normally assigned the duty of cooking for the crowd, but they also go to be entertained. Munyoyaya women are also very keen in observing Islamic ceremonies marked on the Islamic calendar. During the festival of Iddi-ul-fitr to mark the end of Ramadhan fast, the Munyoyaya women and children especially looked extremely happy with new clothes and veils. The women had woken early to start preparing the special food and drinks required for the day. There were dances all over the village, especially performed by the women and children. This confirms Saal's assertion that "key family events are important to women, with each occasion marked by careful observance of local and religious customs" (1993, 61).

Munyoyaya women are also keen on traditional events like childbirth. After the forty days of seclusion for a new mother, the women joyfully go to her place to drink tea and celebrate with her for coming back to the community. The forty days of seclusion are days when the new mother is kept away because she is ritually unclean. No man is allowed to see her at all. This researcher witnessed how one non-Munyoyaya man was literally pitched by the women for entering the hut where a new mother was. He had to buy tea for all of them as an additional punishment. After the forty days are over, the mother is taken to the river, if near, or to the bathroom, where she is washed by her fellow women. She undoes her hair and washes it clean as a symbol that she is now ritually clean to interact with the community. This is a time of celebrating together with the other women.

Weddings are also occasions for celebration for the Munyoyaya women. If the bride-to-be is a virgin, more preparations are made than if she is not. The women seem to celebrate more for a virgin girl getting married. Wedding arrangements are also elaborate for a young couple that is marrying for the first time. The ceremony culminates in songs and dances, especially at night, where women adorn themselves with perfumes and nice head veils, as they escort the new bride to her new house.

General Status of Munyoyaya Women

Aruki was quick to say, “Munyoyaya women are despised by men, who do not take their word seriously. Women are not even supposed to speak in a meeting where men are.” Aruki however exempted herself as a woman who has been able to gain respect among men. She attends meetings and her opinion is generally respected unlike other Munyoyaya women. She explains that this would basically be because of

the respect the community has for her father, Gujema, as well as how she has been able to carry herself respectfully in spite of her education and profession.

Chief Adan agrees that the Munyoyaya women are generally not respected where decision making is involved. Women are still not accepted as leaders in the Madogo location, according to him. He further explains that a number of them have become educated, yet the community has not accepted them as leaders when they attempt to lead. Maimuna consents by saying that: “Culturally Munyoyaya women are not supposed to stand and address men, even if a woman is highly educated. Women are ‘devils’ (*mashetani* in Kiswahili), since they can easily cause men to be attracted to them when they listen to their voices.” Maimuna however reckons that Munyoyaya women are now becoming enlightened and have refused to be cowed down to always be behind men. The women are now rising up even politically to vie for the seats. Mumina intends to vie for the seat of a councilor in the forthcoming general elections.

Chief Adan reports that the general perception of the status of the Munyoyaya women is more determined by their fertility. He asserts that: “Women are meant to give birth to children, especially boys, for the propagation of the family name.” A barren woman is normally despised and is subjected to traumatizing experiences including divorce. Giving birth to girls makes the concerned mothers go through hard times. Pressure mounts from her husband and his family to produce male children as illustrated by Tunda’s account. Tunda is a young mother of girls who went through a hard marriage. She is still a youthful mother having been married at the age of fifteen. Her husband wanted a boy as a first born. When she got a girl as her first child, her husband accepted it. But when the second born was a girl, her husband’s attitude towards her changed drastically. He did not even take care of her when she delivered her second born. She had to go to her mother’s house even though that was the

custom of the Munyoyaya women after giving birth. For Tunda it was a big relief because her husband had started neglecting her. Rumors reached her that her youthful husband was interested in another youthful girl. It did not therefore come as a surprise to Tunda when her husband announced his intention of marrying a second wife. This hurt Tunda because her husband had initially assured her of being the only wife. Tunda could not help but move on with her life.

Munyoyaya women do not inherit anything from their fathers. According to Aruki, this is more traditional and shows how women are despised as they are perceived to be incapable of taking care of property. Aruki however argues that this is un-Islamic since the Qur'an says that girls can inherit property half of what the sons would receive. Aruki reckons that the Munyoyaya people are not aware of this Qur'anic reference. Her father, who is a religious man and understands Qur'anic teachings, has actually demonstrated his understanding by allocating part of his inheritance to his daughters. Aruki thus has some property inherited from her father.

Factors Influencing Munyoyaya Women's Participation

This sub-section is subsequent to the previous one that has dealt with the societal roles and status of the Munyoyaya women in the Madogo location. The section is interpretative in that it will show how the roles and status of the Munyoyaya women as described above have influenced them towards participating in the possession cults.

Economic factors

It has been noted that the Munyoyaya women have resorted to looking for ways to get some income in order to support their families. One of the ways of getting

money is by being a practitioner. Hassan and Borushi earn some income as practitioners. Borushi has been able to educate his children. Saumu has also realized she could earn some money like the other practitioners, hence her participation in the ayaana cult. She has been frustrated while waiting for her charcoal-burning husband, who uses most of the money he gets on *miraa*. She feels bad when her children go to school hungry, and thus would want to alleviate the situation. She continues to participate in the *ayaana* cult in hope that one day she will be promoted to be a *fundu* and thus earn more money to take care of her children. This therefore means that some Munyoyaya women join the possession cults for financial gain.

Religious frustration

There is a sense of religious frustration that is experienced by the Munyoyaya women. This stems from a realization that they can not fulfill all the requirements of their religion. Kim explains that this is essentially true in many communities that practice a monotheistic religion which "demands unrealistic standards of religious duties" (2001, 97). The Munyoyaya women are part of the larger Munyoyaya people group that is predominantly Muslim. It has been noted above how the Munyoyaya women struggle to keep the religious requirements such as the observance of the Ramadhan fast. Their natural situation however prevents them from fulfilling all the requirements of Islam even if they want. They can not pray or fast or touch the Qur'an while in their menses, for example.

Their resignation that "let God be my judge . . . I have tried my best" is interpreted by this researcher as an indication of this religious frustration culminating from these failed attempts to keep to the religious standards.

This researcher further perceives that this is also the reason why the Munyoyaya women would be keen on trying to observe the socio-cultural events where they can feel a sense of religious participation, since religion pervades all their socio-cultural events. The Munyoyaya women have relegated themselves to a supposedly inferior position in regards to Islamic matters. Maimuna said that women are generally “devils” as they can easily cause men to stumble especially in religious matters. This researcher interprets such a notion as another cause for the religious frustration for women. They therefore seek for a place they can easily engage their spiritual dimension without reference to their feminine makeup. On discovery that this can be found in spirit possession cults, many Munyoyaya women do not hesitate to participate and be counted as adepts. The fact that they can get into trance and speak a strange language when possessed gives them some spiritual experience that is absent in their formal religion.

This researcher thus infers that they get excited over such experiences even though in general they may not be pleasant as Saumu reports, and they are also costly. The shame of finding out what they did during the ritual (like drinking raw blood or meat as reported above) seems to be outweighed by the fact that they can have an ecstatic experience. Hence they participate in possession cults since they do not know of any other way of a spiritual encounter.

Psychological and spiritual frustration

Kim (2001, 97) observes that in societies that are supernaturalistically oriented, “a sense of insecurity usually comes from a spiritual frustration.” The Munyoyaya women experience such a sense of frustration that stems from a realisation that they can not subdue the spirit world. It will be illustrated later in this

paper how the Munyoyaya women are supernaturalistically oriented and thus explain almost all issues in a supernaturalistic sense. They believe in the spirit world. They believe that the spirits are part and parcel of their daily lives. These spirits include: the *ayaana*, *tairieni*, jinn, and *ruhani* spirits. The Munyoyaya women fear these spirits since they are believed to cause diseases and other forms of suffering. The *ayaana* especially seems to be a major contemporary concern for the Munyoyaya women in the Madogo location. They try wearing charms and amulets to wade off their malevolent effect but to no avail. They try reading the Qur’an (*kisomo cha kitaabu*) so that they are safeguarded from *ayaana* attacks, but this does not bear fruit either. This frustration is echoed by Maalim Sheikh who believes that beating of the drum for the *ayaana* spirits is traditional and idolatry hence is un-Islamic.

The Islamic leaders in the Madogo location have allowed *ayaana* rituals to continue “as long as one is helped, since there are some practitioners of specific areas qualified to do that. Thus, even though it is wrong to attend those *ayaana* sessions, if people can be assisted, it is well and good, as long as they are relieved of their problems.” This assertion by Maalim Sheikh seems to be a conviction of the Munyoyaya women also, who think that the Qur’anic reading (*kisomo cha kitaabu* in Kiswahili) does not work when it comes to dealing with *ayaana* spirits. This researcher interprets this also as a sign of frustration with Allah, who is perceived to be unconcerned with the people’s daily life. This researcher was indebted to Kim’s explanation that the:

Islamic doctrine of the unity of God (*tauhid*) seldom deals in practical ways with human dilemmas but reinforces the esoteric dimension of the human predicament. According to the doctrine, it is his will that was revealed, not God himself in person. God is absolutely transcendent in Islam (2001, 97-98).

The Arabic name for God, Allah, is mentioned frequently by the Munyoyaya women. Mostly, it is used as a point of exclamation or when one is perplexed over

something. This does not give any indication of an awareness of Allah's presence. This researcher deduces that the Munyoyaya women have little sense of God's relational attribute. He is not concerned that they are afflicted by malevolent spirits especially *ayaana*. He offers them no assistance in dealing with them. They have to devise ways of encountering the *ayaana* spirits apart from Allah. This therefore makes them turn to the practitioners who are seen to have power (*nguvu*) to deal with *ayaana* spirits. Consequently, even though Islam does not allow for *ayaana* appeasement the Munyoyaya women resort to it as the only solution that they have.

Marital insecurity

The Munyoyaya women were noted to have a sense of insecurity in their marriages. Divorce is rampant even in the Madogo location thus they have every reason to fear that their respective husbands would wake up one day and decide to divorce them. A Munyoyaya woman who gives birth to baby girls alone is bound to expect being divorced. A barren woman is an outcast not only to her husband but to the whole community since she is not contributing to the propagation of the tribe. The women therefore try all ways to eliminate these likely cases of divorce. One of the ways they do this is by seeking the help of *ayaana* practitioners. This is especially for barren women, like Hadiya, whose cause of bareness is attributed to the effects of *ayaana* spirits. They attend the sessions first as patients and then as regular members after being healed as they go to show their gratitude.

The marital strain that the Munyoyaya women undergo can be another cause of *ayaana* affliction, hence participation in the cults. Fatuma (2006) and Aruki's friend are examples of Munyoyaya women mentioned in this research, who have been traumatized in their marriages. This condition may be interpreted as emotional

stressful to the extent of aggravating their already inevitable spiritual and psychological frustrations highlighted above. The Munyoyaya women, thus afflicted, would try to get some form of comfort by attending the possession sessions.

Therapeutic factors

A number of the informants narrate how the possessed people had previously been sick and all attempts to seek for healing in medical centers had proved futile. Many of the Munyoyaya women thus participate in the possession cults as patients in need of remedies for their physical ailments. Such ailments that defy formal medical solutions are always attributed to *ayaana* spirits, and hence the resolve to go to the *ayaana fundi* (practitioner). Some of the symptoms of these ailments are: severe pains in any part of the body especially in the head and stomach, fainting, mental disorder, weight loss, paralyzed limbs and so forth. Apparently, all the practitioners interviewed suffered some strange sicknesses that defied medical treatment before they were initiated as practitioners. Apart from these diseases that defy conventional medicine, the Munyoyaya people in general seem to attribute many of their sicknesses to *ayaana* attacks. They reckon that the *ayaana* causes the diseases they suffer. This is the reason why many of them do not go to the medical facilities available to them.

Borushi the practitioner showed this researcher some of the medicine (*dawa*) that he administers to his patients. Many of these seem too strange to dispense to people. Hassan also prescribes some other types of medicines that are bought from a shop belonging to an Arab in Garissa town. He gives an example of two types called *zafrani* and *kumbi*, which barren women are given to dissolve in water then drink only one glassful. "They conceive immediately", says Hassan.

Although such treatment of physical sickness may sound strange to outsiders, the Munyoyaya people believe in them and they do not perceive them as strange. This is a Munyoyaya belief system that provides them with solutions to their perplexities especially when they are physically unwell. This therapeutic efficacy especially in solving infertility and child-bearing problems among the Munyoyaya women enhances the popularity of the *ayaana* cult.

Social factors

The participants of the *ayaana* sessions include those who attend for social purposes like entertainment. Some participate merely to socialize with fellow kinsmen and women. Women are generally perceived as inclined to the *ayaana* cult sessions as a way of socializing with other people in a place where there are no segregation restrictions. This is one of the reasons that the Islamic leaders reckon that the *ayaana* cult is un-Islamic, since it allows for the mixing of both men and women. The participants of the cult sessions considered themselves as Muslims still, and they are well aware of this religious prohibition of mixing. However, it is deduced that the socializing aspect, together with the other factors mentioned in this section, far outweigh the religious merits that would be accrued supposedly by obeying the religious injunctions like segregation of sexes.

Curiosity is another social factor that drives young girls like Sinti (2006) to attend the sessions. There are young school-going children who are attracted by the singing and dancing during *ayaana* sessions. Other people also attend for entertainment as well as for curiosity. The bizarre actions, like eating, fire that are performed by the possessed people in a trance state are indeed scenes close to circus

performances. These are bound to entertain as well as draw a crowd of curious observers.

The Munyoyaya women have been shown to enjoy attending socio-cultural events like weddings, circumcision ceremonies and so forth. Saal (1993, 61) refers to Muslim women as guardians of cultural practices to a large extent. Agreeing with Saal, this researcher also perceives that more women than men attend these socio-cultural events, including the *ayaana* sessions. This is an indication of the women's presupposed role as guardians of the cultural practices. The fact that *ayaana* spirits did not originate with the Munyoyaya people does not prevent them from embracing it as their own. *Ayaana* spirits and cultic sessions in Kenya originated with the Borana people in the northern part. These same Borana people introduced the cult to the Munyoyaya people in the Madogo location. Apparently, the Munyoyaya associate themselves with the Borana ancestry, and thus they may have embraced the *ayaana* cult as still part of their common heritage.

Pragmatic nature

This research will show later how the Munyoyaya worldview is basically supernaturalistically oriented. Suffice it to mention that such an orientation generally makes them pragmatic in nature. They will try all remedies to solve their problems. They will go to the Islamic teacher to receive the treatment of the Qur'anic reading. They will also visit the witchdoctor and the diviner; at the same time they will consult the *ayaana* practitioner to receive appropriate treatment. As Hiebert, Shaw and Tienou (1999, 84) record concerning the pragmatic nature of folk religion adherents, the Munyoyaya women will try all these remedies without caring which medical system will help them. Their only interest is how to be well irrespective of the method

employed. Essentially, the focus is on power as “the ability to make things happen” (ibid.,). Hiebert, Shaw and Tienou further explain that in such a pragmatic world, “everything can be explained in terms of competing powers and power encounters in which the stronger dominates the weaker. There are no such things as accidents” (ibid., 85).

The above is true concerning the Munyoyaya women and their inclination to the *ayaana* cult. Their pragmatism is based on the quest for a power that will counteract the powerful acts of the malevolent *ayaana* spirit. They seek for this power from the Qur’anic teachers. If they are not helped, they go to the *ayaana* practitioner, who seems to have power (*nguvu*) to control these spirits. Such an interpretation is further endorsed by the informants’ resignation (like Maalim Sheikh) that even though the *ayaana* practice is un-Islamic, yet if someone can be assisted by it they can continue attending the sessions. This also explains why the Munyoyaya women will still resort to the *ayaana* cult even if active participation as members or patients is costly. They would rather work extra hard if they are able to convince their husbands and relatives to look for money so that they can give what the *ayaana* and its practitioner demands.

Summary

The Munyoyaya women play some significant societal roles. They are forced to engage in economical roles as they can no longer depend on their husbands as breadwinners. Their religious roles may not be as clearly defined as the men’s largely because of the natural occasions that make them ritually unclean. They also assume the role of guardians of the religio-cultural occasions. The society gives them a relatively low status especially in religious matters.

These roles that are assumed by the Munyoyaya women also contribute to the factors that make them be inclined towards the possession cults. These factors are: economical, therapeutical, marital and social. Apart from these, there are other factors that are considered as significant in influencing the Munyoyaya women to attend the possession cults. These are the religious, spiritual and psychological factors. These three factors revolve round the worldview of the Munyoyaya women that is basically supernaturalistically oriented. The belief in the malevolent spirits that are part of their daily lives makes them have a sense of insecurity when they are unable to deal with them. God is perceived to be too far from their daily concern. They thus turn to the *ayaana* practitioners who are able to control the actions of these spirits.

Evaluation of Lewis’ Theory

R.Q 3 How does the phenomenon of spirit possession among the Munyoyaya women relate to Lewis’ theory of deprivation?

- i. What are the similarities and differences between the phenomenon of possession in the Munyoyaya context and the context surrounding Lewis’ theory?
- ii. What can be anthropological responses to Lewis’ theory in light of the Munyoyaya women’s experiences?

Creswell (2002, 279) asserts that interpretation of data in qualitative research design can be done in view of past research to show how the current findings support or contradict the previous studies. In light of this, this section attempts to interpret the data collected for this current study by relating it to the theory that Lewis developed from his research work involving the *saar* cult of Somalia and other communities. A general overview of Lewis’ theory has been provided in Chapter Two (Literature Review) of this thesis. Some repetition will, however, be made for the sake of comparing and contrasting the Lewis’ theory with the Munyoyaya context of spirit possession as a way of responding to the Lewisian theory. It is with caution that an

attempt is made to compare and contrast two different cultural settings since each has its own peculiarities.

Similarities between Lewis' Context and the Munyoyaya Context of Spirit Possession

- Participants and their epidemiological situation

Lewis' theory was based on the premise that the majority of the participants of possession cults are women. This also implies that the majority of the people possessed by malevolent and capricious spirits are women. However, men are also included. The Munyoyaya context of spirit possession also involves women as a majority of the participants of the possession sessions. This research consents with Lewis that the majority of the people possessed, thus, are women. Yet participants also include men, as Lewis also realized.

The epidemiological situation of the Munyoyaya women involved in the possession cult generally resembles the situation of the women studied by Lewis, especially the Somali women. This research has described how the majority of Munyoyaya women face many maladies in their life especially that attributed to the *ayaana* spirits. Similarly, the Somali women according to Lewis suffer from illnesses and other psychological disorders that are perceived to be caused by the *sar* spirits.

- Possession experiences

The general origin of the possessive spirits in both the Lewisian and the Munyoyaya contexts is similar; both assert that the spirits originate from outside the communities (Lewis 1989, 27). The *ayaana* and *tairieni* spirits that possess the Munyoyaya women come from the Borana and Pokomo people respectively. The Borana people may not be the immediate neighbors of the Munyoyaya people but they have close ties and origins which are also reflected in their related language.

The *sar* (Somali/Lewis' context) and the *ayaana* (Munyoyaya context) are terms used to refer to both the spirits themselves and the illnesses attributed to them (Lewis 1989, 66-7). In both contexts (Lewisian and Munyoyaya), treatment of the illnesses related to possession spirits is not by permanent exorcism but by accommodation where the spirits are "tamed and domesticated" (ibid., 26). This treatment involves "beating the *sar*" in Somali/Lewisian context, and "beating the drum" in the Munyoyaya context. This is normally a costly affair in both contexts as both the *sar* and the *ayaana* spirits demand relatively expensive things. These demands are made in the spirit's language in both contexts, and through the mouths of the possessed women. After these demands are met both contexts (Lewisian and Munyoyaya) indicate that patients usually recover since the spirits do not torment them after being appeased. This indicates that possession cults in both contexts are perceived as therapeutic interventions (Lewis 1989, 80).

Differences in Lewisian Context and the Munyoyaya Possess Context

- Classification of spirits

Lewisian theory refers to possessive spirits as peripheral spirits. They are peripheral in that they do not play a direct role in upholding the moral values of the societies they are involved in (Lewis 1989, 27). Furthermore, they are peripheral in that they originate from outside the societies in which they apprehend victims. This classification is not valid in the Munyoyaya context of possession examined. The Munyoyaya people do not perceive the *ayaana* spirits as peripheral even though they originated from the Borana people. They are part and parcel of their daily life. They cannot be relegated to the periphery even though their accommodation and cultic rituals are against the orthodox Islamic tenets. These *ayaana* spirits are a great force

to reckon with as indicated by Maalim Sheikh's comment: "Islamic leaders allow the people to attend the *ayaana* rituals still as long as one is helped . . . so long as one is relieved of their problems, otherwise beating of the drum in *ayaana* rituals is traditional and idolatry" (2006).

Hassan, one of the popular practitioners at the Madogo location, mentioned how one senior Islamic teacher (Sheikh) of a local mosque in Madogo had refused to believe in *ayaana*; he had actually despised *ayaana* and the practitioners involved. One day, this Sheikh got sick and tried all Qur'anic remedies to no avail. He eventually accepted to go for diagnosis and treatment after agreeing that *ayaana* was true. This incidence implies that *ayaana* is quite central in the livelihood of the Munyoyaya people as a whole. It is not a peripheral phenomenon as Lewis' theory asserts. It seems to have been accepted as the Islamic way of life in practice, even though ideologically it is not recommended in the world of orthodox Islam.

Practitioner Hassan comments that the Munyoyaya people are increasingly being possessed by the *ayaana* spirits. This is perceived to be an alternative solution to the spiritual and psychological frustration experienced in Islam. This therefore invalidates the Lewisian theory of relegating the spirits and their cultic rituals to the periphery. Furthermore, Lewis mentions the therapeutic interventions that these cults effect (1989, 80). This is also observed among the Munyoyaya people. This intervention is crucial in the perception of the Munyoyaya people. The fact that the *ayaana* spirits can be negotiated with in order to relieve suffering then makes them central in the Munyoyaya life.

The *ayaana* spirits are not involved in upholding the moral code of the Munyoyaya society. This, then, may warrant Lewis to classify them as peripheral since they are amoral. However, the Munyoyaya people have another system that they

use to check the moral values of the members of society. They do not need the spirits to keep the moral values.

- Participants of the possession cults

In both the Lewisian and the Munyoyaya contexts women are perceived as the majority of the participants in possession cults. Men also participate in both contexts, but the difference lies in the assertion by Lewis that the men involved in these possession cults are those in the "downtrodden categories of men who are subject to strong discrimination in rigidly stratified societies" (1989, 27). The Munyoyaya context proves to be contrary to this Lewisian assertion about the kind of men who participate. The practitioners involved in *ayaana* possession cult in the Madogo location are virtually men, who have earned fame and respect for the work they do. The men who participate as patients are not downtrodden or politically or economically deprived. The senior sheikh who went to practitioner Hassan (2006) in the Madogo location cannot be said to be downtrodden or deprived in any way. There may be some men who attend the cult sessions as observers or patients who are economically deficient. This cannot justify the Lewisian theory that the men who attend are generally downtrodden.

The context of Lewisian theory includes participants who are said to be emotionally distressed. These are the young Somali girls who were jilted by their perceived lovers and eventually became distressed. They are diagnosed to have the *sar* spirit, and thus are treated accordingly (1989, 65-66). Such cases of unrequited love do not feature among the Munyoyaya women, as observed by this researcher.

The kind of women who are said to participate in the possession cults according to the Lewisian theory are socially, economically, and emotionally deprived. Their epidemiological situation has already been alluded to and is seen to

bear some semblance to the Munyoyaya women's situation. However, the fact is that spirit possession is not confined to such deprived women in the Madogo location. Nuru, the seven year old daughter of Maimuna (2006), was afflicted by the *ayaana* spirit when she was barely a month old. Aruki's (2006) five year old boy was also diagnosed as having *ayaana* spirit. Aruki herself had also been diagnosed as afflicted by *ayaana* spirit when her hair started falling off. Aruki is a relatively well-to-do woman from a good family according to the standards of the Munyoyaya women of the Madogo location. These are just a sample of those said to have the *ayaana* spirit, who are not necessarily deprived in any way save for the physical ailment that needed remedy. There, however were patients among the Munyoyaya women who have emotional needs, like Fatuma, the divorced sister of Ayub.

- Possession cults as protest movements

Lewisian deprivation theory also asserts that the deprived people involved in spirit possession cult generally have feelings of antagonism against the domineering party in a stratified society. Lewis illustrates how the Somali women have grievances against the men whom they see as oppressors. The Somali women perceive that their epidemiological situation described above is instigated by men. Husbands are seen as negligent of their familial responsibilities making the women strive hard to survive and feed the family. Insecurity in their marriage life is largely blamed on the men who can divorce their wives at their own wish, and can take an additional wife without even consulting their present wives. Such a scenario causes women to attend possession cults as a way of airing their grievances or of gaining some form of satisfaction. The possession cults are also perceived to be a strategy to forward their feminine interests at the expense to the men. Hence Lewis interprets all these as

implying that possession cults are virtually "clandestine religion" (89) or "ritual rebellions" (114). Lewis also refers to them as "protest movements directed against the dominant sex" (1989, 26).

The context of the Munyoyaya women's involvement in the possession cult, however, defies Lewis' assertion of possession cults as protest movements. The Munyoyaya women studied in this paper did not perceive themselves as protesting or airing grievances against the opposite sex. They certainly have a similar epidemiological situation as that of the Somali women as stated above. They however do not have the same worldview assumptions as those of the Somali women. The Somali women are naturally aggressive, as this researcher agrees with Lewis' assertion (This researcher has interacted with the Somali women in Garissa town to some extent). They do not exude an "unflinching acceptance of hardship and to an unquestioning endorsement of the position accorded them by men" (Lewis 189, 67). Hence, they would have every reason to go for anything that would facilitate their grievances to be aired. This is not the case with the Munyoyaya women.

The Munyoyaya women seem to have accepted their lot. They take their positions and roles as dictated to them by their society and do not attempt to question. The educated women like Aruki (2006) and Maimuna (2006), who have also had opportunities to interact with other societies, do accept that women are considered as inferior to men. Maimuna even asserted that women are "devils (*mashetani*)", while Aruki said that women's decisions are not considered seriously. This acknowledgement from some educated Munyoyaya women has not made them look for avenues to air their grievances. They seem to have accepted their position in society and yet have moved on to improve their own individual lives by acquiring education and being employed. They have not joined the possession cults in order to

protest against any domination by men. It is therefore inappropriate for Lewis to assert that possession is a “spiritual interpretation of female problems common to many cultures, whose diagnosis and treatment gives women the opportunity to gain ends (material and non-material) which they cannot readily secure directly” (1989, 77).

Conclusion of Response to Lewis’ Theory

Studying the context of spirit possession among the Munyoyaya women has led this researcher to refute Lewis’ assertion that possession cults are considered as peripheral in the society since they are basically amoral. She has also disproved Lewis’ assertion that possession cults are largely for deprived people who feature in a rigidly stratified society. The participants of these cults, who are said to be deprived, join the cults as a way of airing their grievances as well as protesting against the domination. This is also disproved by this study.

The conclusive remarks in response to the Lewis’ theory of deprivation seek to explain the deficiency of Lewis’ assumption that all cultures are similar, and hence what applies to the Somali women would apply to all other communities. It may be appropriate for Lewis to assert that the Somali women join the possession cults to air their grievances. It would, however, be inappropriate to assume that this applies to all women in other cultural settings who participate in possession cults. Lewis does not realize that there is the realm of assumptions, values and allegiances peculiar in every cultural setting that dictates the way people behave (Kraft 2000, 1-9). This is the realm of worldview that makes the Somali women perceive life differently from the Munyoyaya women. The Munyoyaya women will not perceive the possession cults as protest movements like their Somali counterparts. This is because their assumptions,

values and allegiances do not allow for such an interpretation. To them, possession cults are largely therapeutic avenues for solving their spirit-caused problems.

Lewis is said to have confessed his shortcoming according to Larsen (1995, 21-22). Larsen asserts that Lewis acknowledged he did not carry out participant research, which made his work to be more subjective than objective. Unless a person studying a particular cultural group understands the deeper level of a culture, he/she is bound to come up with inappropriate conclusions or generalizations. The reason for undertaking this study of the Munyoyaya women is so that this researcher can understand them at their deep level of assumptions, values and allegiances. To gain such an understanding, this researcher employed a research design that would enable her to get the insider’s (emic) view of their participation in the possession cults. This she did through the passive participant observation of the phenomenon as well as carrying out extensive interviews with the participants.

Lewis addresses the phenomenon of spirit possession from a sociological perspective alone. He may have had his genuine reasons for doing so. This, however seems to be a narrow focus that precludes important dimensions of life which would have given him a more reasonable interpretation and analysis of spirit possession cults. This current research has indicated how adherents of monotheistic religions, who are also supernaturalistic oriented, experience spiritual and psychological frustrations. Such frustrations are largely because of their belief in the transcendental nature of Allah as well as the sense of inadequacy in dealing with malevolent spirits. The Somali people and other Islamic tribal groups mentioned by Lewis may experience the same frustrations that would make them look for remedies in the *possession cults*. *Lewis’ sociological focus excludes such an interpretation which is deemed vital.*

Analysis of Phenomenon of Spirit Possession

This section seeks to analyse the phenomenon of spirit possession and how the Munyoyaya women participate in it. Two kinds of analysis are undertaken: analysis using Kraft’s universal theory, and Biblical analysis.

Analysis Using Kraft’s Worldview Universals

Kraft’s worldview universals (2000, 8-11) theory is adapted herein as a tool for analyzing the Munyoyaya worldview in relation to the world of spirits. He defines worldview universals as the categories of assumptions that are found in every worldview (2000, 8-1). Kraft follows Michael Kearney’s worldview universals, but labels them differently with some expansion. Kraft’s universals are: person/group, relationship, classification, causality, time/event, and space/material world. According to Kraft, the universal category of person/group is the way people or a group relates to other peoples or groups as well as relate to themselves. He also asserts that the person/group involved in a worldview have a way of classifying or categorizing the other universals including themselves and other people or groups. Below is a diagrammatic representation of the universal categories as found in the worldview of the Munyoyaya people in relation to the spirit world.

Table 10. Worldview universals in the Munyoyaya context

(Munyoyaya) Person/Group	← Relationship →	Categorization/Classification/Logic
		Person/Group(social environment)
		Causality/Power
		Time/Event
		Space/Cosmology/Material world

The table above summarizes the contents below. The Munyoyaya people have a way of categorizing the other, which includes other people/group, causality factors,

time/events factors, and space/material world. Each of these will be explored below in relation to their perception of the spirit world.

Munyoyaya classification of the spirits

The Munyoyaya people believe that spirits are part of their human world. They have different ways of categorizing the spirits. One classification is on the basis of whether a spirit is Islamic or not. This classification is not very popular as this researcher noticed. Among the informants interviewed only one agrees that there are some Islamic *ayaana* spirits while others are mostly non-Islamic. Much of their categorization of spirits is on the basis of the language used by the spirits in communicating with the practitioners. The *tairieni* spirit speaks Kilwana (Malakote language) while the *ayaana* spirit speaks a language close to the Borana language.

To the Munyoyaya people all spirits are “bad” since they cause a lot more harm than good to people. Some are however considered “good” by virtue of the fact that they cooperate easily with the practitioners during the sessions. The intensity of the harm done by a particular *ayaana* spirit makes it be classified as very bad because it demands human blood. While the Munyoyaya people see all spirits as bad, they still maintain that the spirits can be domesticated and be helpful in relieving their problems. Many of the physical or mental illnesses that the Munyoyaya people suffer are basically related to the spirits, especially the *ayaana*. To relieve these problems the *ayaana* spirits are considered as beneficial. Hassan (2006) acknowledges that “*ayaana* spirits can ‘help’ people, where the medicine from the hospitals cannot.”

Another classification of spirits is based on the terminology employed by different people regarding their view of the folk phenomenon in Islam. Those, like Maalim Sheikh (2006), who advocates the Islamic ideology, classify *ayaana* and

tairieni spirits as *mashetani* (devils), whereas the rest of the people who are inclined towards the folk dimension of Islam tend to classify *ayaana* and *tairieni* spirits in the category of *pepo* (spirits).

Munyoyaya perception of other people/group in relation to the spirit world

The Munyoyaya people acknowledge that they are closely related to the Borana and Orma with whom they share a closely related Oromo language. These tribal groups, especially the Boran, have influenced the Munyoyaya people to a large extent. It has been noted that the Munyoyaya acquired the *ayaana* spirits from the Borana people. Thus, two of the Munyoyaya practitioners are Borana who have been fully accepted in the Munyoyaya community. The other respected practitioner is an Orma, acknowledged as a high ranking practitioner in spite of his young age. It seems that the Munyoyaya consider these bigger tribal groups, Borana and Orma people, as more powerful in dealing with the spirit world. The Waata, Gabra, Sakuye, and Garre, are also Oromo speaking tribes, who have come in touch with the Munyoyaya people of the Tana River District. However, these are considered as inferior to the Munyoyaya. There are some Waata people in the Madogo location who are despised by the Munyoyaya and they have to settle at the periphery of the location. They also become possessed by the *ayaana* spirits but none of them has become a practitioner in the location.

The relationships among the Munyoyaya people themselves can be cordial as required by the *umma* community. Yet this researcher noticed that there was a lot of jealousy, suspicion, bitterness, hatred, and other negative feelings. *Ayaana* spirits thrive in such an environment. Many people get injected (Swahili: *kudungwa*) with the *ayaana* spirits when they annoy someone who is already having an *ayaana* spirit.

This was the case with Maimuna, whose daughter, Nuru, was injected by an *ayaana* spirit from her grandmother. Maimuna had quarreled with her mother-in-law who had an *ayaana* spirit already. Hassan (2006) also asserts that more women become possessed by *ayaana* spirits because they like quarreling, which can create a conducive environment for passing on the *ayaana* spirits to others.

Munyoyaya perception of causality

The Munyoyaya people strongly believe that the *ayaana* spirits cause the majority of the health problems they have. Cases like HIV/AIDS have also been attributed to *ayaana* spirits. Mental disorder, fertility problems in women, unsuccessful business ventures, and death are some of the results of attacks by *ayaana* spirits. Apart from such spiritual beings there are also some spiritual forces that are causative agents in the Munyoyaya society. Such forces include the evil eye (Swahili: *kijicho*), which is mainly effected through jealousy and evil feelings against other people. This researcher was informed that one should never comment that something belonging to someone else is good. This would cause destruction to the good thing as an effect of a possible evil eye of jealousy. This researcher saw some Munyoyaya children with a small patch of hair on a clean-shaven head. The reason given for this was to make the children unattractive so as to avoid the evil eye of jealousy.

Munyoyaya concept of time/event in relation to spirits

Kraft (2000, 9-19) asserts that traditional communities are more event-oriented than time-oriented. Being event-oriented implies that time in the quantitative sense is given less priority than the meaningful achievement of a given event. This is true of the Munyoyaya community. They are generally event-oriented as they focus

on an eventful achievement rather than the time taken. This is also seen in relation to their dealings with the *ayaana* spirits. It has been mentioned in this thesis that a little girl like Nuru, Maimuna's daughter, has to wait for a period of time before the *ayaana*'s demands are fulfilled. The event that would trigger the spirit would be her marriage and not a specific time or number of years.

This event-orientation among the Munyoyaya people is also evidenced by the occasion of the possession sessions. These usually take a whole night since the quantity of time is not regarded. The focus is on the event of meaningful communication with the *ayaana* spirits so that its identity is revealed, its demands known and granted, and an agreement for peace is eventually established.

Munyoyaya perception of space

The worldview universal of space will herein be considered in two dimensions. First, space will be discussed in relation to the physical area, and second, space as a cosmological concept will be explored. The Munyoyaya people acknowledge that there is sacred space in relation to spirits. The places where the *ayaana* sessions are performed are considered sacred. Every participant is therefore required to remove their shoes, as well as be ritually clean in case of coitus. Anyone violating this sacred space is easily picked out and can be publicly embarrassed.

The second dimension of space considered here is the cosmological view of the Munyoyaya people with regard to the world around them. They subscribe to the Islamic cosmology that views Allah as existing in the other-worldly realm together with angels. This realm is beyond human reach. In Western cosmology a dichotomous view is usually found: that is, the natural and the supernatural worlds (Kraft 1996,

197). This dichotomous view is however not in line with the Munyoyaya cosmological view, as indicated in the diagram below.

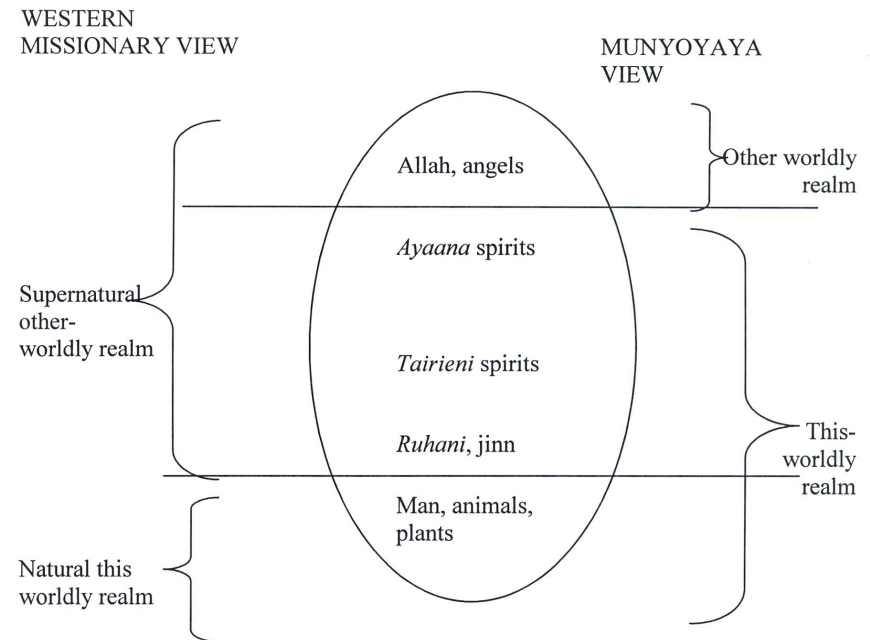


Fig. 2. Cosmological view of the Munyoyaya people compared with the Western missionary view

According to the Munyoyaya cosmology, all spirits and jinn co-exist with man, animal and plants in the realm considered in the diagram above as this-worldly. This contrasts with most Western views that would include the spirits and the jinn in the other-worldly realm, while man, animals and plants are found in the natural this-worldly realm.

Munyoyaya relationship with spirits

The Munyoyaya people relate to spirits like the *ayaana* and *tairieni* as members of the same this-worldly realm. These spirits, however, are perceived to be more powerful than ordinary Munyoyaya people. This is because they have the ability to inflict the people with sicknesses and other problems, which the ordinary Munyoyaya person is not able to control. This leads to a type of relationship between the Munyoyaya people and the spirits that is enshrined with a lot of fear and suspicion. The Munyoyaya people fear that the spirits can attack them at any time and cause suffering. They have to try all means not to invoke the wrath of these spirits as well as take protective measures like wearing charms and amulets. In case the spirits are said to be annoyed with the people they make this known by causing trouble. They inflict their victims with illness and other problems.

The remedy for these attacks according to the Munyoyaya people is to get a practitioner who is deemed powerful and able to control the spirits. Such a practitioner is not an ordinary person. He is a master of the spirits (shaman) endowed with special power and ability to communicate with the spirits and know their demands (Lewis 1989, 45). This puts such a person at a higher social level as far as the societal relationship is concerned. This is the reason why practitioners like Hassan and Borushi are well respected among the Munyoyaya people of the Madogo location even though they do not belong to the Munyoyaya tribe, and also in spite of Hassan's tender age. It all has to do with power. These are powerful men able to deal with powerful spirits.

This analysis of the Munyoyaya worldview using the worldview universal tool thus paves the way for a Biblical analysis of the concept of power. The reason for this power focus is evident. The above analysis shows how the concept of power is

significant in the beliefs and practices of the Munyoyaya people. They look for people endowed with power to control the powerful spirits that are part of their daily lives.

Biblical Analysis of Power in Relation to Spirit Possession

Life among the Munyoyaya women as part of the larger group is mainly about encountering the spirits that exist among them and are involved in their daily life. It is about power encounters and competition where the powerful one dominates the weaker (Hiebert, Shaw and Tienou 1999, 85). Yet what kind of powers do the Munyoyaya women contend with? This is a question addressed in this analytical session that seeks to find out about the Biblical concept of powers and then compare it with what has been discussed in this thesis concerning the spirits that affect the Munyoyaya women.

Biblical concept of powers

This biblical analysis focuses on the New Testament (N.T) for an understanding of the concept of powers. It is therefore appropriate to explore first the meaning of the term "powers" and its usage in the N.T. Arnold shows how the author of the epistle of Ephesians differentiates between the power of God and the powers of evil. The power of God is expressed in the following Greek terms in the first chapter of Ephesians: δυναμις (power), κρατος (might), ισχυς (strength), ενεργεια (working of power), and ενεργεω. Powers of evil are described as: αρχη (principalities/rulers), εξοσια (authority/powers), δυναμεζ (powers) and κυριοτηζ (lordship/dominion) (Arnold 1989, 70).

The power of God is the divine power, which is eternal and greater than the powers of evil. It is the power that effects good things: for instance, creating the

world, resurrecting Jesus from the dead, healing the sick as well as delivering people from the evil powers. It is the power that Jesus used to destroy the works of Satan (1 John 3:8). He did this by casting out demons from people and healing them of various diseases. Thus Prior rightly qualifies Jesus' power as integrative, making whole, uniting, mending, healing, restoring and liberating (1987, 99).

This power that was available to Christ while he was here on earth was also availed to his disciples by the Holy Spirit in order to perform mighty acts as they preached the gospel. Stephen, for instance, was full of power and faith and did great wonders and signs among the people (Acts 6:8). This power was used by the disciples and "gave witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus" (Acts 4:33). This power was given to the disciples of Christ in order that they might bear witness of Christ's resurrection as well as the authenticity of his word so that many would believe in him. Power to perform signs and wonders was given as a means to an end, and not an end in itself. The aim was that people would believe in Christ Jesus and put their faith in him.

On the contrary, the powers of evil are perceived to be spiritual beings that manifest themselves as evil forces influencing people towards wickedness and oppression. These beings are supernatural and include Satan together with his host of demons. Satan was created as an angel of God but fell because of pride and the desire to be equal with God. A host of other angels "sinned against God and now continually work evil in the world" (Grudem 1994, 412). Satan is the head of these angels referred to as demons. He uses them to oppose and attempt to destroy God's work by deceiving people (like he did to Adam and Eve), inflicting people with disease (like Job), killing people and other destructive work that hinders people from focusing on God. Satan and his hosts also try to use "temptation, doubt, guilt, fear, confusion,

sickness, envy, pride, slander, or any other means" to stop Christians from being effective and live according to God's will (ibid., 415).

Jesus came to destroy what Satan and his hosts had achieved in men. By casting out demons and healing the sick, he was reversing the effects of evil powers that had afflicted men. He gave his disciples power to counteract these works of evil that are still manifested today. This spiritual conflict between powers of evil and the power of God is termed as spiritual warfare. Yet it is not about God competing with Satan. God can never be put on the same level with Satan in assessing who is stronger. This spiritual warfare is a moral encounter. It is a battle between evil and holiness, between justice and injustice, and between love and hate (Hiebert, Shaw and Tienou 1999, 274-275).

Dealing with possessive spirits in the Bible

This subsection shows how possessive spirits are dealt with in the bible. It is confined to the way Jesus and his disciples dealt with these spirits. This will be the criterion on which to assess the way the Munyoyaya people deal with the spirits. Two tables are given below to illustrate how Jesus and his disciples dealt with the spirits as shown in the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles.

Table 11. How Jesus dealt with possessive spirits

Gospel Reference	Victim of possession	Mode of healing
Mt 8: 28-34 Mk 5:1-20 Lk 8:26-39	Two demon-possessed men in Gadarenes	Direct exorcism: Demons sent into pigs
Mt 9:32-33	Demon possessed man who was mute	Direct exorcism
Mk 7: 25-30 Mt 15:21-28	Syro-Phoenician woman's daughter possessed by an evil spirit	Jesus drove demon out by word of faith from a distance
Mt 8:16-17	Many demon possessed	Direct exorcism

	people brought to Jesus	
Mt. 17:14-21 Mk. 9:14-29 Lk. 9: 37-42	Demon possessed boy with seizures	Direct exorcism
Mt. 12:22 Lk. 11:14	Demon possessed man who was blind and mute	Jesus healed him; he could talk and see.
Lk. 4:33-36	Demon possessed man in the synagogue at Capernaum	Jesus commanded the evil spirit to be quiet and come out of the man

Table 12. How the Apostles/disciples dealt with possessive spirits

Reference	Victim of possession	Mode of healing
Lk. 10:17	Many people under demonic influence	Direct exorcism in the name of Jesus
Acts 16:16-18	Slave girl with a fortune-telling spirit	Direct exorcism in the name of Jesus
Acts 19:12	Many people possessed by evil spirits	Direct exorcism
Acts 5:16	Many people tormented by evil spirits	All were healed by direct exorcism

The tables above show that there were spirits that inflicted people with various maladies in the time of Jesus and the apostles. These spirits were commonly referred to as demons (δαίμονες) or evil/unclean spirits (πνεύματα καθαρταω/πνεύματα πονηρα). Brown (1986, 694) explains that it was “natural in the world-view of the first century that the mysterious powers which afflict men should be thought of as evil spirits”. These were also referred to as demons, as Brown realizes, where this reference is mainly found in the synoptic gospels. It is noteworthy that the gospel of John does not have any reference to exorcism or evil/unclean spirits.

Jesus dealt with these evil spirits by way of direct exorcism and not accommodation. He was able to converse with them although nowhere in the scriptures is it shown that he talked with the evil spirits at length. In some instances the demons inside the possessed person identified Jesus as the Son of the Most High God (like in Mk. 5:7). In the same incident Jesus asked for the names of the demons

before commanding them to come out of the possessed man. Jesus could not accommodate the evil spirits at any time. His intention was to destroy the work of Satan. The evil spirits are thus shown to be inferior to the divine power which was also worked through the disciples of Jesus in the Gospels and in Acts of the Apostles. Brown acknowledges that this divine power exhibited in Jesus’ ministry of exorcism, was a sign that the end-time kingdom was already present with people (1986, 695).

Biblical Analysis of the Munyoyaya Concept of Power

This current study has shown how the Munyoyaya women participate in the spirit possession cults. They participate in them in accordance with their enculturated assumptions, values and allegiances that dictate how they behave. Their worldview is a component of the larger worldview of the Munyoyaya people, which has been described as power-focused.

The biblical context where power/powers were displayed in the life of Jesus’ ministry and his disciples seems to have some general semblance with the Munyoyaya context surrounding the phenomenon of spirit possession. This is the supernaturalistic context that seems to have pervaded the life of the Jews in the time of Jesus and also that of the Munyoyaya people. These similarities are reflected in the table below.

Table 13. Similarities between Jewish and Munyoyaya contexts of spirits

Jewish context (Jesus’ time)	Munyoyaya context (today)
Supernaturalistic orientation	Supernaturalistic orientation
Belief in demons/evil spirits that caused defects like muteness, dumbness, seizures	Belief in spirits (<i>ayaana</i> , <i>tairieni</i>) that cause sicknesses and other problems like barrenness
Belief that these spirits are more powerful than ordinary men	Belief that the <i>ayaana</i> and <i>tairieni</i> spirits are more powerful than ordinary Munyoyaya
See the need of a power person to deal with the evil spirits	See the need of a powerful practitioner to control the activities of the spirits

Table 13 above shows that the Jews in the time of Jesus perceived the evil spirits as powerful and needed a person endowed with special power to deal with them. This basically resembles the way the Munyoyaya people perceive the spirits and how they require a powerful person to deal with the capricious spirits.

A major point of departure has to do with the Munyoyaya concept of God. It has been shown how their cosmological view relegates God to the other-worldly realm where he is seen as unconcerned with the daily affairs of the Munyoyaya people. This contrasts with Biblical concept of God and consequently of power/powers. In the first place, Jesus' presence on earth meant that God came to dwell with his people. He therefore was showing his direct concern for his people.

The Munyoyaya people need to realize the truth, that God is concerned about their plight with the malevolent spirits and generally about their daily lives. They should also realize that his divine power that raised Jesus from the dead is still available as it was during Jesus' ministry. Yet this great working of divine power against the powers of evil is not an end in itself. It was proof of the coming of the kingdom of God on earth which further implies that it was an invitation for people to be part of this kingdom. The problem with the *ayaana* practitioners among the Munyoyaya people is that they tend to exude the power to be able to control the spirits but this is all done for self-glorification and monetary gain. The end is achieved when the practitioner is seen to be victorious in controlling the work of the spirits. This was not so in the case of Jesus and his disciples. As they dealt with demon possessed people they wanted the people to focus on God's relational glory and not on themselves.

The manner in which the *ayaana* practitioners deal with spirits is also contrasted with the Biblical accounts. Jesus and his disciples never accommodated the

evil spirits; they did not seek to appease them either. The tables in the preceding pages show that Jesus directly exorcised the demons by commanding them to leave their victims. He did talk with them, but this was not to try and find out what they required to relieve the possessed of trouble. Hence from a Biblical perspective the *ayaana* practitioners do wrong when they try to appease and accommodate the spirits. These spirits are classified Biblically as evil spirits and thus must be exorcised from people's lives. This does not mean that after exorcism the spirits will no longer be a threat to the people. The not-yet aspect of the kingdom of God indicates that Satan and his evil spirits will still continue tormenting people. Scripture alludes to this fact by asserting that "the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour" (1 Peter 5:8). Verse nine of the same chapter says that this devil should be resisted and never accommodated.

Contribution to Cross-cultural Christian Witness

R. Q 4 What are the contribution of the above findings to cross-cultural communication of the Gospel among the Munyoyaya Women?

This analysis of the Munyoyaya women and people in general from a Biblical basis shows that they are ignorant of the Biblical way of dealing with possessive spirits. Their ignorance is however based on the lack of knowledge of truth since they are not aware of what the Bible says. This then makes the findings of this current research significant as it reveals the felt-needs of the Munyoyaya women and the people in general. It shows how they indulge in appeasing evil spirits that should essentially be directly exorcised as Jesus and his disciples did. Thus there is a dire need for the cross-cultural communication of the Biblical concept of power to the Munyoyaya people. This should begin by first putting right the misconception of God in the minds of the Munyoyaya women. They need to be told the truth about God who

is Emmanuel, God dwelling with his people. This is the truth encounter that will correct the wrong idea about Jesus in the minds of the Munyoyaya people. The Munyoyaya women need to realize that in the coming of Jesus as a man, God chose to dwell with his people on earth. He chose to walk and experience with them and to destroy the works of the devil who was at work in the daily lives of people.

The formidable task involving the conveying of truth about God, however, is in trying to convince the Munyoyaya women that Jesus is more than a prophet as they have been taught in their Islamic classes. The attempt to convince them that Jesus is indeed God is nevertheless not futile as it sounds. The suggestion here is that any cross-cultural communication of the Gospel truth should be steeped in a relational perspective. Anyone seeking to communicate the Gospel with the Munyoyaya people should establish firm relationships with them. In the context of the possession phenomenon, this study has shown that there is need to understand the women's perspective of the possession cults. This seeks to understand why they would want to attend the sessions yet their religion is basically opposed to it. It calls for a relational attitude that will require the one seeking to share the Gospel to go with them to the cult sessions in order to understand the women's participation without condemning them for being unreligious.

This study has also contributed significantly to the way this researcher views the Munyoyaya women and their participation in the possession cults. It was mentioned how this researcher had previously worked among the Munyoyaya women as a missionary and was frustrated by the supposedly formidable task of sharing the Gospel with them. She had not realized that their participation in the possession cults was a crucial outcome of their worldview which pointed to a significant felt need in their life. She would condemn their participation without properly understanding all

these. This research has enabled her to understand the women in a way she had not done before. As she conversed with them and attended the possession cults, she has come to a deeper knowledge of their deep spiritual and psychological needs that make them resort to the *ayaana* practitioners for help. Their participation is only an outward behavioral ritual that conveys deep assumptions and allegiances that need to be dealt with.

Before carrying out this research and realizing the need of understanding the worldview of a particular people, this researcher had been convinced by Lewis' explanation of the participation of women in spirit possession cults. She had tended to believe that the Munyoyaya women, among others, attend the cults because of their social and emotional deprivation. This study has disproved Lewis' deprivation theory that seems to be inappropriate in giving an explanation for possession.

Another significant contribution of these research findings is in the area of providing background information. It is an important communication concept that requires the communicator to understand his/her audience before sharing the message. This research has found out some significant background information that would be helpful for the cross-cultural communication of the Gospel to the Munyoyaya women. It has been noted before that the Munyoyaya people's story has not been documented apart from some current attempts. This research thus contributes to cross-cultural communication in illuminating the world of the Munyoyaya women.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study has examined the phenomenon of spirit possession and how the Munyoyaya women in the Madogo location participate in it. Essentially, this was a missiological study that sought to understand the Munyoyaya women in a deeper way in order to derive appropriate ways of sharing the Gospel with them. The study also sought to respond to Lewis' theory of deprivation regarding possessive spirits and possession cults.

Cognitive anthropological perspective was chosen for this study as it sought to investigate the implicit assumptions of the Munyoyaya women. To facilitate this, the ethnographic tradition of qualitative research was employed. This was found to be appropriate as the implicit assumptions that underlie the behavioral participation in possession cults were realized.

The findings from this research reveal that the worldview of the Munyoyaya women includes a belief in spirits that are regular components of their daily life. This makes possession cults a common cultural feature among the Munyoyaya people. Munyoyaya women participate in the *ayaana* spirit possession cult because of a number of factors. Spiritual and psychological factors significantly influence their participation. The Munyoyaya women do not consider themselves as downtrodden. They have assumed societal roles that give them some esteem. This disproves Lewis' deprivation theory which asserts that women generally participate in peripheral possession cults because of being deprived economically or socially in a rigidly stratified society.

This study has shown how the findings of this research have missiological implications for cross-cultural communication of the Gospel to the Munyoyaya women. The concept of power as displayed in the phenomenon of spirit possession among the Munyoyaya women was analysed from a biblical perspective. This revealed inconsistencies with the biblical concept that need to be rectified.

Conclusions

The findings emanating from this research led to the following conclusions:

1. The Munyoyaya women's worldview is essentially supernaturalistic in orientation when put on the supernaturalism scale. This is because they assume the activity of spirits in almost all areas of their lives. This is especially so on the causality area where spirits are said to cause almost all the problems the Munyoyaya people experience, like sicknesses and barrenness. All these then implies that the Munyoyaya women consider spirits are real beings and not imaginary.
2. The Munyoyaya women are power-focused people. This is indicated in the way they pragmatically look for power people to help them in controlling powerful spirits that cause them trouble. Their pragmatic search has made them accept the Borana practitioners among them, who are perceived to be powerful enough in dealing with the spirits, especially the *ayaana* spirits.
3. This study joins the ranks of people who disprove Lewis' deprivation theory. It has been shown that the participants of possession cults are not discontented people who seek redress.
4. Socio-economical factors are not adequate to explain the participation of women in possession cults. There are other underlying factors that are crucial

in influencing the participation of women. These are the psychological and spiritual factors that have been detected by an indepth study of the worldview of the Munyoyaya women.

5. The Munyoyaya worldview needs transformation because it has been found to be deficient in providing security to the people. This conclusion concurs with what Kraft says about a well-functioning culture. He asserts that such a culture provides its people with psychological and spiritual security that result in human well-being (Kraft 1996, 78). The Munyoyaya women are psychologically and spiritually frustrated thus they do not live contented lives.
6. The power people who are the *ayaana* practitioners are able to deal with the *ayaana* spirits since they can communicate with them and enquire about their demands. Yet the fact that the spirits still torment people and the practitioners have to keep holding regular sessions shows that they are not able to gain full control of the spirits in a way that they can stop them from troubling people completely.
7. This inability to fully control the spirits shows the inadequate power that mortal man has without being endowed with the divine power of God. This power made Jesus and his disciples deal fully with the spirits tormenting the people in the first century. They were able to command the spirits to leave their bodily abodes so that the people previously possessed but the spirit would be set free from their control. This is the message that the Munyoyaya women need to hear, that there is divine power available through Jesus that can set them completely free. It would first require a worldview change so that they see God as concerned with their plights, as he is not confined to the other-worldly realm.

Missiological Implications

The findings of this study have prompted some missiological implications that are discussed herein.

- Significance of anthropology

This study has sought to understand the Munyoyaya women as people from a cognitive anthropological perspective. The results have been satisfactory as a better understanding of the women has been gained. The implication for cross-cultural Christian witness accruing from this is that anthropological studies are crucial. Cross-cultural missionaries deal with people. If they have to undertake effective ministry they have to understand the people themselves. This understanding can be gained through anthropological studies that seem to have been relegated to the secular realm of studies. Kraft asserts that anthropology has virtually been an unknown term in the Christian circles including in the Bible schools of seminaries (1996, 2).

- Worldview study for Christian witness

The research findings of this study show that worldview studies reveals the deep seated felt needs of a cultural group that enable any missionary or Church worker to approach any Christian witness from these felt needs. Burnett is quoted as having said that any Christian transformation of a culture involves changing the worldview themes of that culture (2002, 228). To get to know these worldview aspects of a cultural group requires a worldview study that is quite involving. It is a long and tedious procedure that takes a long time. Many cross-cultural missionaries would tend to prefer a shorter way of outreach because of the quest for fast results. This has made the missionary task to be quite formidable especially in Islamic fields. This can be rectified by a decisive move to study the worldview contents of the people group to be reached with the Gospel.

- Evaluating/assessing cultures

Cross-cultural missionaries have the task of evaluating the people they seek to share the Gospel with. This evaluation should be based on the Scripture as the blue print for any assessment. The missionaries also inevitable tend to judge the cultural practices of the particular people according to their own backgrounds. This study has assessed a cultural practice of the Munyoyaya women. The researcher attempted to avoid any preconceived ideas and instead went in to understand the women from an emic (insiders') perspective first. This was based on the premise that the insiders have a better understanding of their own cultural practices than the outsider who is the researcher or the cross-cultural missionary. This avoids making fast judgements that would not pave the way to proper analysis of the practices and thus not give the appropriate recommendations for witness.

Recommendations for Cross-cultural Christian Witness

This current study has shown that the power concept of the Munyoyaya is not correct when analyzed from a Biblical perspective. The remedy for such a view can be done as the Munyoyaya people begin to realize that God is not only transcendental. He also dwells with his people and is absolutely concerned with their daily lives. This implies the availability of divine power to deal with evil spirits. Yet, a crucial question that has not been dealt with so far is: How do the Munyoyaya get to hear the truth about God and his power? This is the main concern of this section that attempts to give some recommendations for missionary work among the Munyoyaya people and other "power-oriented" Islamic communities. These are given below.

- Need for a worldview perspective

Cross-cultural Christian workers among the Munyoyaya people needs to realize the importance of studying the Munyoyaya worldview. There are currently six church and para-church organizations that work among the Munyoyaya people in the Madogo location. Each of these has set strategies and policies that should help them to share the Gospel with the people in an effective way. This study recommends that all these groups need to have a worldview focus that will enable them to understand the deep level of the Munyoyaya culture. This will help them not to focus on the explicit behavioural practices that are only a "tip of the iceberg". It is also suggested that all missionary training should incorporate worldview studies in their training curriculum to ensure that missionaries know what is required in a worldview study.

- Munyoyaya people as folk Muslims

It is recommended that anyone sharing the Gospel with the Munyoyaya people should regard them more as "folk Muslims" than as "orthodox Muslims". This means that there is a need for separating the "Muslims" as people from "Islam" their ideological religion. Such a differentiation will help the Christian workers among them to learn more about the folk aspects of Islam. The conventional way of studying Islam has been geared to learn more about the orthodox aspects of Islam. This proves futile as one does not encounter much of these orthodox aspects among the Muslim cultural groups like the Munyoyaya people.

Training for Islamic mission fields should thus intergrate the folk dimension of Islam in their curriculum. This will help the missionaries realize that there is an "unseen face of Islam" that they will inevitable encounter in the Islamic mission field.

- Need for a contextualized power concept

Love (2000, 10) posits that “contextualization concerns itself with how the *text* (of scripture) relates to the *context* of a people group” This suggestion of the need to contextualize the concept of power among the Munyoyaya people thus means that the biblical concept of power is presented in a way that relates to the context of the Munyoyaya people. These are power oriented people, as has been mentioned. They look for power people to deal with powerful spirits.

This study has shown how the Biblical (New Testament) concept of power is displayed basically in the way Jesus and his disciples dealt with the evil spirits. They did not appease them. The Munyoyaya people should therefore be informed that they should not appease the spirits as these belong to the same category of the evil spirits exorcised by Jesus and his disciples. The alternative that should be given to the Munyoyaya people is in availing the power of God to them. This is done through the missionaries or Church workers who endeavor to share the gospel of Christ to the Munyoyaya people and others who are similarly power-oriented. The missionaries or church workers should therefore be aware of the Biblical concept of power (power encounter), and even believe that the same divine power portrayed in Jesus’ and his disciples’ ministry, is available also today. The missionaries should thus be ready to take the position of power-people, who would be instrumental in exuding divine power in the name of Jesus like his disciples in the Gospels and Acts.

- Church planting among the Munyoyaya people

Love also suggests the need to focus on church-planting among the folk Muslims (2000, 9). He asserts that reaching Muslims by evangelism is only a beginning step toward a greater goal. The goal should be to establish “committed, growing communities-communities of the King” (ibid., 13). This researcher consents

with Love’s suggestion of church planting among the Munyoyaya people. There should be a deliberate goal to establish churches that are places of power where the Munyoyaya men and women can go to search for a stronger power that is able to deal with the malevolent spirits.

An emphasis on power encounter should be a means to an end. The end is that God is glorified when the Munyoyaya people accept the power of God to deal with the evil spirits as well as to deal with their sinful hearts. This is when they come to the saving knowledge of Christ and a church is established in their midst as more of them embrace the faith. Such a church should also develop a clear theology of suffering. As the Munyoyaya people come to believe in Christ, they should be told that this is not the end of their suffering. They need to know that the devil is still at large, and would seek after them more after their conversion. Thus they should not think that they have been exempted from his attacks. He will attack them, and even cause evil spirits like the *ayaana* spirit to torment them and cause them to suffer. But they should have a perspective that God is able to deliver them from such attacks, and if he does not, he is still sovereign and he knows why they would need to suffer only for a time. They should also be aware of the not-yet aspect of the kingdom of God. Yet a time is coming when the kingdom of God will finally be realized in all its fullness and men will not have to contend with the powers of evil any more.

Recommendations for Further Studies

There is need to study the other aspects of the Munyoyaya worldview that have not been tackled in this current study. This would provide a more comprehensive way of understanding the Munyoyaya people and thus know the other felt-needs that

they have. This study dealt with only a part of their worldview that is however a crucial component and that has revealed crucial felt-needs.

This current study has shown how the Borana people have influenced the *ayaana* concept among the Munyoyaya people. This researcher thus suggests that a full study be made of how the Borana women participate in the *ayaana* possession cult and then relate it with how Munyoyaya women participate. This recommendation is given with the awareness that there have been some attempts to give an account of the *ayaana* spirit as found among the Waso Borana people in northern Kenya (Dahl, 1989). Yet this is not comprehensive enough.

The other Oromo-speaking groups, like the Orma, Waata, and Sakuye, could also be studied in the context of the spirit possession to see if they would also have some semblance with the Borana context. The Borana people are considered as superior Oromo speakers in Kenya and have a considerable influence on the other smaller Oromo language groups.

This research also recommends that other villages, where the Munyoyaya people stay, be studied to see how women participate in the possession cults. These would include the neighboring villages to Madogo, and the other locations which make up the Madogo division. These locations are: Sala, Saka and Mororo locations. Studies to be carried out in these areas could be from a cognitive anthropological perspective.

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APPENDIX A: GUIDING QUESTIONS

Specific Questions about *ayaana*

1. Questions about *ayaana*.
 - What is the meaning of the word "*ayaana*"?
 - Where did *ayaana* spirits originate from? Were they created by God? If so, why were they created?
 - When were the first cases of *ayaana* possession cases reported in Madogo?
 - How does *ayaana* possess a person?
 - What are the symptoms that a person is possessed by the *ayaana* spirit?
 - How are *ayaana* spirits transmitted to other people?
 - Do *ayaana* spirits die?
 - What other spirits possess Munyoyaya people? Are there specific spirits that possess women?
2. Questions about *ayaana* specialists
 - Who are the specialists of *ayaana* in Madogo?
 - How did they become *ayaana* specialists?
 - How are they distributed locally i.e. where do each stay?
 - Are there any women practitioners?
 - What qualifies the *ayaana* specialists, i. e for one to be able to treat in *ayaana* sessions?
 - Any hierarchy involved among the *ayaana* specialists?
 - Who is the leading specialist in Madogo?
 - How much do they each charge per session?
 - Do they have any other sources of income?
 - Any particular inclination to a color, e.g red?
3. Questions about *ayaana* sessions
 - What is the name given to these sessions?
 - What name is given for the ritual place in the language ie. where the rituals take place?
 - How often are *ayaana* sessions performed?
 - Who calls for these sessions?
 - Are there any specific stages involved? What are they?
 - Who attends the sessions? What is the proportion of men to women who attend the sessions? Any children?
 - Who mostly frequent the sessions- the old or the young people?
 - When are the sessions performed? What is the duration of the sessions?
 - What happens during the sessions? (Details please).
 - What are the basic requirements needed for each session?

- Any religious aspects included in the sessions? Eg. Islamic prayers uttered?
- How do trance experiences come about?
- What happens when a patient is in trance? Any abnormal behavior?
- How is communication with the spirits carried out and in which language?
- If singing is involved how do the spirits show their approval or disapproval?

Questions about the role of Munyoyaya women

1. Economic role

- Are Munyoyaya women involved in any forms of employment? Which ones?
- Do they carry out any businesses? Which ones?

2. Political role

- Are Munyoyaya women involved in any form or level of politics? Which ones?
- Any woman as a political leader?

3. Religious role

- How active are the Munyoyaya women in religious matters? How often do they go for salaah prayers, Friday prayers, etc.?
- Do they observe the full Ramadan fast?
- Are there any women who have attended higher levels of Islamic studies?
- What level of madrasa have most women attained?
- Are there any women religious leaders? How are they accepted by the community?
- How do men view the religious level of women?

4. Family role

- What is the role of Munyoyaya women in the family?
- Do they accept these roles well?
- How do they view their domestic position? Do they feel oppressed by the men?
- How do men view the role of women in the family?
- How is marital faithfulness among the Munyoyaya men and women? Are they promiscuous?
- Are the men polygamous?
- What is the rate of divorce among the Munyoyaya?

5. Social role

- Do women play any social roles in the community? Which ones?
- Any property ownership by the women?
- Are women involved in any form of social functions? Which ones?

General questions about the Munyoyaya people

1. Locality and leadership of Munyoyaya people

- Where are they situated? - get a map of: 1. Coast province; 2. Tana River district; and, 3. Madogo location that shows the sub-locations or divisions.
- Who are the leaders of the Munyoyaya people in Madogo? What are their designations in their language?
- Are these leaders recognized by the government officials?

2. Settlement

- When did the Munyoyaya people settle in Madogo?
- Why did they settle here and from where did they come from?
- Which year did they settle in Madogo?

3. Islamization

- When did the Munyoyaya people become Muslims?
- What made them be Muslims?
- How did they become Muslims?
- What religion did they practice before they became Muslims? (ask for particulars eg. If they engaged in African traditional religion, how and what did they do).
- Do they have their own Islamic leaders? How learned are they in terms of the religion?
- How many mosques are there in Madogo?

4. Kinship organization

- Are they patrilineal or matrilineal?
- Who is the head of the family?
- Who is the decision maker? Who is the bread winner?

5. Origin of Munyoyaya

- Where did they originate from?
- Are there any legends, myths that are told relating to their origin?
- Who are the founders of the tribe?

6. Population composition

- What is the population of the Munyoyaya people as per the last census?
- What is the population of men? Women? Children?

7. Education

- What is the literacy level of Munyoyaya people?
- Are there enough educational opportunities among the people?
- Are girls taken to school?
- What is the highest level of education attained by the Munyoyaya? How many have attained these in Madogo?

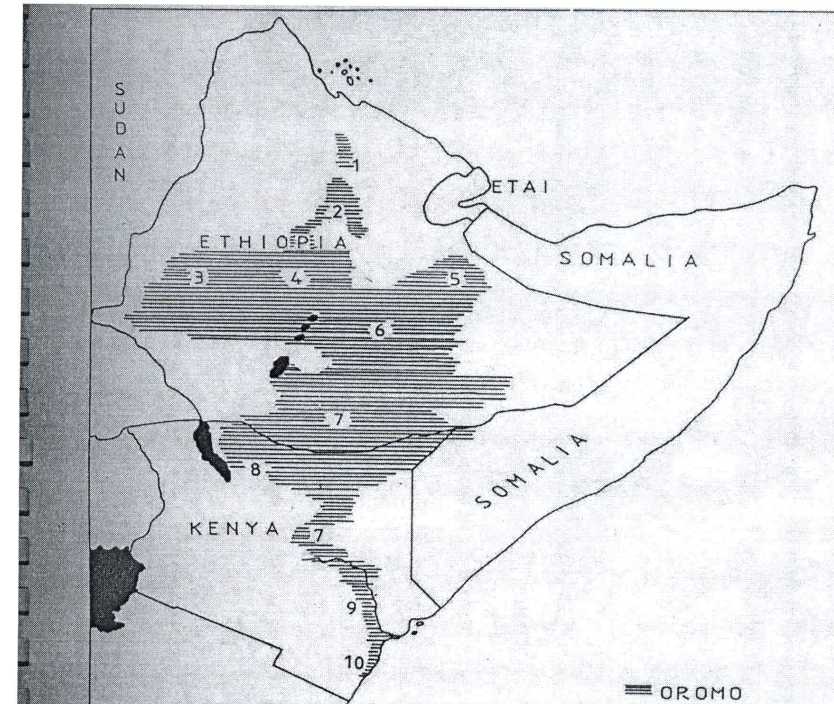
8. Outreach to Munyoyaya

- Which Christian organizations have worked or are working among the Munyoyaya people? When did they start working there?
- Any Muslim Background Believers (MBBs)? Which church(s) do they attend?
- Are they receptive to change in religion?
- What is their reaction when the gospel is shared to them?
- What developmental projects have been initiated among them? How successful have these been in achieving the goal(s)?
- How many churches are there in Madogo?

9. Health issues

- What are the common diseases among the people?
- How do they treat these diseases?
- Do they go to the health facilities near them?
- What are the diseases that are associated with ayaana spirit possession? And who diagnoses?
- Is child mortality rate high? What are the causes?

APPENDIX B: MAPS

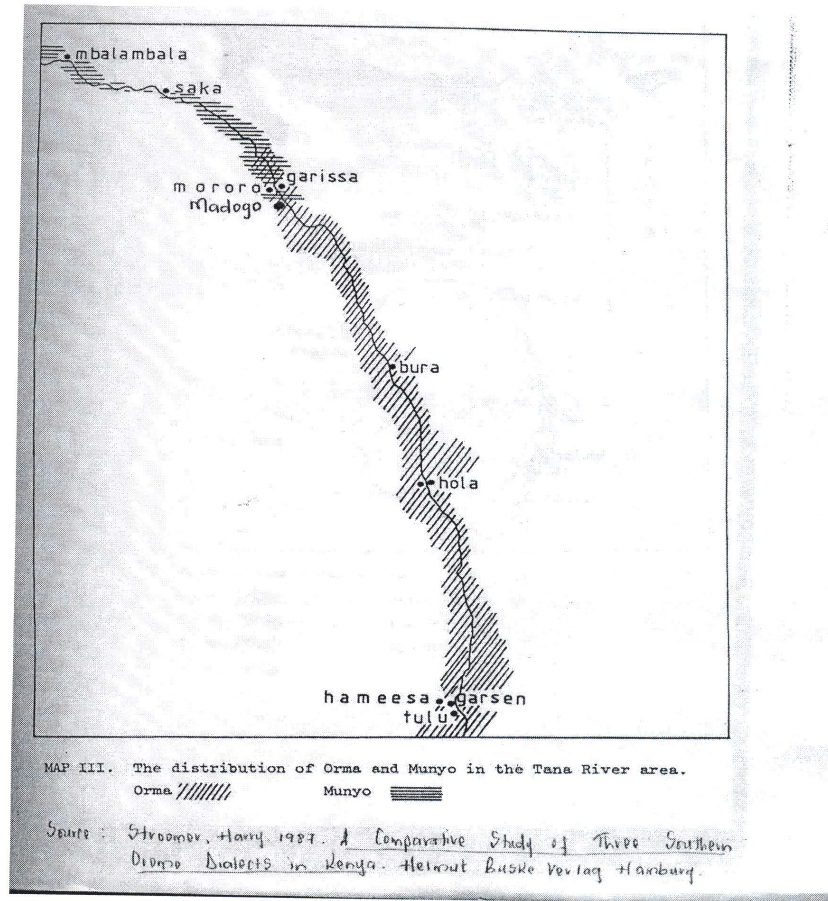
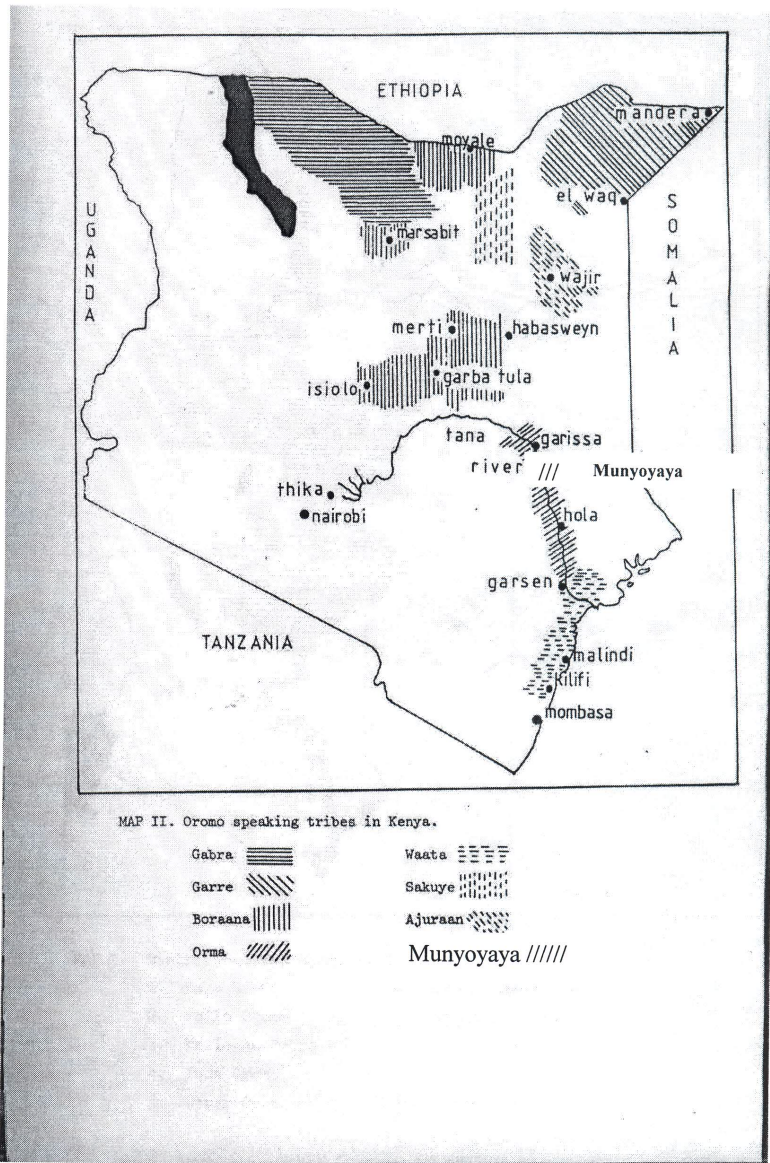


MAP I. Distribution of Oromo in Ethiopia and Kenya.

- | | |
|-------------------|------------------|
| 1. Raya Oromo | 6. Arussi Oromo |
| 2. Wollo Oromo | 7. Boraana Oromo |
| 3. Wellegga Oromo | 8. Gabra Oromo |
| 4. Shoa Oromo | 9. Orma Oromo |
| 5. Harar Oromo | 10. Waata Oromo |

Map 1: The area occupied by the Oromo people

Source: Stroemer, Harry. 1987. *A Comparative Study of Three Southern Oromo Dialects in Kenya*. Helmut, Buske Verlag Hamburg



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1992	Missions Training	Centre for Mission Training, Garissa
1988-1991	BSc. Agricultural Economics	Egerton University
1986-1987	Kenya Advanced Certificate of Education	St. Brigids high School, Kitale
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WORK EXPERIENCE

Missionary and missionary trainer with The Sheepfold Ministries in various fields in Kenya:

1992-1993	Mororo, Tana River district
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