



# INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT



**Editors:**  
Tom Kwanya, Peter Matu



# INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

**Editors:**

Tom Kwanya, Peter Matu

The Technical University of Kenya • Nairobi, Kenya

ISBN 978-9914-764-15-4



9 789914 764154

©2024 The Technical University of Kenya

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced in any form by any electronic or mechanical means (including photocopying, recording, or information storage and retrieval) without permission in writing from the publisher.

International Conference on Information and Knowledge Management (3<sup>rd</sup> : 2024 : Nairobi, Kenya)

Indigenous Knowledge and Sustainable Development/editors: Tom Kwanya, Peter Matu, The Technical University of Kenya.

x, 674 pages ; 17.6 \* 25.0 cm.

978-9914-764-15-4

1. Indigenous knowledge. 2. Sustainable development. 3. Traditional medicine. 4. Indigenous languages. 5. Indigenous arts 6. Indigenous ethics. I. Kwanya, Tom. II. Matu, Peter. III. Title.

Z666.5.I58 2024.

**This manuscript was subjected to rigorous two-step double-blind peer review prior to publication.**

Design and Production: Lucy Kibe, Alexander Wamonje

Cover image: Pixabay, used under Creative Commons Zero (CC0) License.

Printed in Nairobi, Kenya



*Film Kenya... Capture Africa!*

# CONTENTS

Acknowledgements .....	viii
Preface .....	ix
Foreword .....	x
<b>Section One: Traditional Medicine and Healthcare .....</b>	<b>1</b>
1. Application of traditional medicine to mitigate diseases and ailments in Elgeyo Marakwet County, Kenya <i>Moses Kiprono Bullut*</i> ; <i>Christine Cberono Tuitok**</i> ; <i>Tom Kwanya***</i> .....	2
2. Evaluating the Efficacy of Traditional Family Planning Practices among the Kipsigis Community in Kericho County, Kenya <i>Janet Chepkoech*</i> ; <i>Hesbon O. Nyagoma**</i> ; <i>Ashab Owano***</i> .....	18
3. Indigenous Knowledge on Herbal Treatment of Pediatric Illnesses Among the Luo Community in Kenya <i>Rachel Adhiambo Otieno*</i> ; <i>Ashab Owano**</i> .....	31
4. Indigenous Medical Repository System of The Luo Community: A Prototype <i>Ochieng Bostone</i> .....	41
5. Nurturing Traditional Medicine and Healthcare Amongst Kalenjin Community in Kenya <i>Hosea K. Chumba</i> .....	54
6. Rediscovering Traditional Medicinal Herbs Used by Kikuyu Community in Kiambu County, Kenya <i>Lorna Wairimu Mungai*</i> ; <i>Ashab Owano**</i> .....	66
<b>Section Two: Indigenous Knowledge and Intellectual Property Rights.....</b>	<b>79</b>
7. Cultural Recognition and Intellectual Property Rights for Ohangla Dance and Music in Kenya <i>Afline Susan Annor*</i> ; <i>Ashab Owano**</i> .....	80
8. Indigenous knowledge and intellectual property research in Africa: a bibliometric study <i>Angella Kogos</i> .....	89
9. Indigenous Knowledge and Intellectual Property Rights: A Reasoned Discussion <i>David M. Nguru*</i> ; <i>Wambui Njonge**</i> .....	102
<b>Section Three: Indigenous Knowledge and Education .....</b>	<b>116</b>
10. Historical Interventions on the Psychological Well-being of Adolescents in Uganda using a Socio-Cultural Approach <i>Masitula Namugenyi*</i> ; <i>Anne Ampaire**</i> .....	117
11. Indigenous Knowledge and Education in Uganda: Drawing from the Curriculum Dilemmas at Education Transitional Levels <i>Anne Ampaire*</i> ; <i>Alice Merab Kagoda**</i> ; <i>Masitula Namugenyi***</i> .....	131



12. Initiation and Health Education: The Feasibility of Message Delivery Through a Traditional Cultural Channel <i>Donna Pido</i> .....	142
13. Role of Indigenous knowledge in formal education: A case study of the Ateso Community <i>Nderitu James Ndegwa</i> .....	151
14. The Role of Indigenous Knowledge on Curriculum Development in Kenya: The Competence-Based Curriculum <i>Erick Odhiambo Ogolla</i> .....	163
<b>Section Four: Indigenous Languages and Communication</b> .....	<b>172</b>
15. An Analysis of Scientific and Technical Terminologies in Indigenous Language Television: A Case Study of the Program “Penj Laktar” <i>Gladys Akelo Otieno</i> .....	173
16. Collaborating with native Lubukusu language speakers in CBC Education in Kenya for maintenance and preservation of Indigenous Languages <i>Ann Lusike Wafula*</i> ; <i>Teresa Atieno Otieno**</i> ; <i>Damien Abong’o***</i> .....	182
17. Multimodal constructions: WhatsApp memes and indigenous language use <i>Damien Clement Abong’o</i> .....	191
18. Promoting indigenous languages: code-switching and code-mixing in political discourse in Dholuo <i>Damien Clement Abong’o*</i> ; <i>Teresa Atieno Otieno**</i> ; <i>Ann Wafula***</i> .....	201
19. The Importance of Indigenous Language in The Curation and Preservation of Indigenous Knowledge <i>Teresa Atieno Otieno*</i> ; <i>Ann Lusike Wafula**</i> ; <i>Damien Clement Abong’o***</i> .....	211
<b>Section Five: Indigenous Knowledge and Food Security</b> .....	<b>223</b>
20. Effective Communication Strategies for Dissemination of Integrated Soil Fertility Management Practices Among Smallholder Farmers in Makueni County, Kenya <i>Daniel Otieno Adero*</i> ; <i>Naomi Mwai**</i> .....	224
21. Integrating Artificial Intelligence with Indigenous Knowledge in Food Security Practices within Kenya Women in Parliament Association (KEWOPA) <i>Odini Larissa</i> .....	240
22. Research Productivity and Trends on Indigenous Kalenjin Cuisines <i>Jennifer Barmosbo*</i> ; <i>Tom Kwanya**</i> ; <i>Hesbon Nyagowa***</i> .....	253
23. The Role of Indigenous Knowledge of Dietary Foods in Enhancing Food Security in Kenya <i>Ashab Owano*</i> ; <i>Ruth Adeka**</i> .....	265
<b>Section Six: Indigenous Knowledge, Environmental Conservation and Climate Change</b> .....	<b>275</b>
24. Application of Indigenous Knowledge in Climate Change Mitigation by Small-Scale Farmers in Nyeri County, Kenya <i>John N. Gitau*</i> ; <i>Edith M. Gitau**</i> ; <i>Grace N. Kamau***</i> .....	276
25. Indigenous Rainmaking Practices and Their Impact on Climate Change in Western	

Kenya	
<i>Bilba Atieno Omubambe*</i> ; <i>Tom Kwanya**</i> ; <i>Ashab Owano***</i> .....	284
26. Integrating Indigenous Knowledge in Climate Change Adaptation Strategies: A Literature Review	
<i>Carolyn Nyaboke Museme*</i> ; <i>James Onyango**</i> .....	295
27. The Role of Indigenous Knowledge on Plastic Waste Management in Nigeria	
<i>Aliyu Mamman*</i> ; <i>Musa Gambo K.K. FNIMN, FRP4**</i> .....	305

### Section Seven: Indigenous Knowledge, Agriculture and Sustainable Development 315

28. Akan Indigenous Farming and Sustainable Development Goals	
<i>Edwina Apaw*</i> ; <i>Yinshan Tang**</i> .....	316
29. The Role of Indigenous Knowledge in Agriculture: A Case Study of Kesses Sub County, Uasin Gishu County	
<i>Zipporah Rop*</i> ; <i>Alfred Masai**</i> .....	325
30. Uncodified but Diffused: Mainstreaming indigenous irrigation practices for sustainable agriculture in Kenya	
<i>Irene Adhiambo Oburu*</i> ; <i>Jairus Imbenzi Serede**</i> ; <i>Tom Kwanya***</i> .....	335
31. Promoting Indigenous Knowledge for Sustainable Development in Africa: A Meta-analysis	
<i>Lucy Kibe*</i> ; <i>Tom Kwanya**</i> ; <i>Hesbon Nyagova***</i> ; <i>Benson Ateng****</i> .....	343

### Section Eight: Curation and Preservation of Indigenous Knowledge ..... 359

32. Acquisition, Preservation and Accessibility of Indigenous Knowledge in University Libraries in South East Nigeria	
<i>Ilo Promise I.*</i> ; <i>Madumere Chika P.**</i> ; <i>Iwundu Nkeiruka E.***</i> ; <i>Ezech Godwin S.****</i> .....	360
33. Adoption and Domestication of Metadata Aggregation for Effective Information Retrieval Services in African Indigenous Libraries	
<i>Anwalu Dansale Yabaya</i> .....	374
34. Awareness, Accessibility and Preservation of Indigenous Knowledge for the Sustainable Development of Public Libraries in North Western States of Nigeria	
<i>Hindatu Salisu Abubakar</i> .....	386
35. Mainstreaming Digital Platforms in Curating Indigenous Knowledge for Sustainable Development in Kenya	
<i>Sally Chepchirchir*</i> ; <i>Rachel Kagoiya**</i> .....	396
36. Popularising Traditional Games and Sports Amongst the Luo Youth to Preserve Indigenous Knowledge	
<i>Michael Onyango Okech*</i> ; <i>Henry Ogada Hongo**</i> .....	411
37. Promoting the Potentials of Participative Management: A Catalyst for Regulating Indigenous Libraries in Africa	
<i>Hadiza Umar</i> .....	421
38. Protection of the Luo settlement patterns as a form of cultural heritage at Thimlich Ohinga Archaeological site	
<i>Villary Abok</i> .....	429
39. Publishing Trends on Indigenous Knowledge Research in Kenya (2000 – 2023): A Bibliometric analysis	

<i>Joel Nakitare*</i> ; <i>Grace Wambui Kamau**</i> .....	440
40. Roles of Public Libraries in the Preservation of Indigenous Knowledge of Artisans for Sustainable Development in Kano State, Nigeria <i>Hauma Sani Ahmad</i> .....	451
41. Strategies for disseminating indigenous knowledge in museums for sustainable development: a meta-analysis <i>Irene Ongalo Ayako*</i> ; <i>Tom Kwanya**</i> ; <i>Naomi Mwai***</i> .....	461
42. Strategies for Preserving Traditional Knowledge in Public Libraries in Kenya <i>Azenath Ateka*</i> ; <i>Tom Kwanya**</i> .....	477
43. The curation of indigenous knowledge for conserving cultural heritage <i>Daniel Rankadi Mosako*</i> ; <i>Villary Atieno Abok**</i> .....	488
44. The Role of Public Libraries in Preserving and Promoting Accessibility to Indigenous Knowledge and Culture <i>Ibrahim Idi Ahmad*</i> ; <i>Sirajo Abubakar Danzangi*</i> .....	499
45. Use of Information Communication Technologies in managing and preservation of Bukusu indigenous knowledge <i>Florence N. Weng'ua</i> .....	509
<b>Section Nine: Indigenous Knowledge and Gender Equality.....</b>	<b>517</b>
46. Commercialising Indigenous Pottery Industry to Support Economic Empowerment among Indigenous Akamba Women <i>Pascaline Ndila</i> .....	518
47. Suba Women Success and Traditional Beliefs <i>Judith Abongo*</i> ; <i>Ashab Owano**</i> .....	528
48. The bumpy road to gender equality, women empowerment and girls' education in Malawi: Insights from Chichewa proverbs as wisdom of the people <i>Juliet C. Kamwendo</i> .....	538
49. The Impact of Globalisation on Culture among the Indigenous Women Entrepreneurs in Africa <i>Esther Kathure Mwiti*</i> ; <i>Peter M. Matu**</i> .....	547
<b>Section Ten: Indigenous Arts, Music, Drama, Theatre and Societal Transformation..</b>	<b>555</b>
50. A Portuguese Soldier in Kondo, Tanzania <i>Donna Pido</i> .....	556
51. A Review of Intangible Cultural Heritage Elements of Isukuti Artefact and Ritual among the Isukha Community, Kakamega, Kenya <i>Elphas Muruli*</i> ; <i>Ashab Owano**</i> ; <i>Lilian Oyieke***</i> .....	570
52. Indigenous Art: Paintings in the Lodwar Cathedral <i>Lydia Muthuma</i> .....	581
53. Indigenous Arts: Significance of Indigenous Knowledge Art Form <i>Jacqueline Okeyo</i> .....	591
54. Making Up Maasai Culture: The Turtle Fakes <i>Donna Pido</i> .....	603



## 57. Oppression as a Paradigmatic Component of East African Indigenous Knowledge

Donna K. Pido\*; Martin Khamala\*\*; JP Odoch Pido\*\*\*

The Technical University of Kenya

\**donnapidokenya@gmail.com*

\*\**mankandtank@gmail.com*

\*\*\**odochpido@gmail.com*

### Abstract

*This article aims to bring general attention to the universal human phenomenon of oppression expressed in East African indigenous cultures and knowledge. We cannot take on the enormity of oppression as a problem; neither can we encompass, recount or analyse the enormous literature about it. We can, however, take our biology into account and examine our own experiences. We recount some history and some enlightening stories from our own lives while offering analyses and some suggestions. Our stories focus on the design of systems, activities and products. As a subject, oppression has received scholarly attention and has done so for a long time throughout the world. In India, the term 'dalit' means 'oppressed', 'broken' or 'crushed' to the extent of losing original identity; the caste system and sexuality seem to explain the level of oppression. Political Science scholars say that communism is the main reason for leadership oppression in Russia and in countries with similar ideologies. Meanwhile, racism is often cited as the main reason why there is oppression in Australia, America and Europe. Different types and levels of poverty may explain oppression within Africa, in general, and East Africa, in particular. With the general picture from readings and using participant observation, we get data we analyse and discuss here. By way of generalisation, oppression in Africa has negative and positive sides built into the cultures of the people. It is not enough to dwell on the negative parts; we would do more if we found the social-cultural roles oppression may play in making life tick.*

**Keywords:** *Culture, oppression, power anomalies, inequality, user hostility*

### 1 Introduction and statement of the problem

Social hierarchies embodying unequal relations and often punitive anomalies of power have been pervasive among humans since the beginning of our species. While many cultures have tried to mitigate or eliminate the effects of such hierarchies, they have pervaded East African life during at least the last two centuries. Understanding that in most dyadic relationships, one member has more power, closer examination reveals that a punitive component appears particularly recurrent and pronounced in East Africa. Historical research reveals that punishment and infliction of difficulty, discomfort and harm are at least two centuries old and continuous in East African cultures and societies. At this point, we can merely mention slavery, marriage, intergenerational control and intergender control (Davidson, 1988; Davidson, 1995; Jacobs, 1965; Pido, 1984; Pido, 2000; Were & Wilson, 1966). Efforts to neutralise oppressive models have not yet succeeded (Pido, 2000). We bring together literature and popular culture plus long-term participant observation and experience in describing and analysing the roles of oppression and infliction of pain and hardship in East Africa. As we bring together literature, we focus on slavery and its role in bullying and the esthetic preference for hardship in judging what is good, true, right and beautiful (Levine & Levine, 1966).

For this article, we define oppression as 'causing or inflicting undue harm, discomfort or punishment on another person or people, thus forcing others to do that which is repugnant to

them and the perceived general good'. Considering that meanings overlap between and among languages, we must turn to the other East African lingua franca. We find Swahili's *udbalimu*, which means humiliation, oppression, injustice, and fraud (among many other meanings); it is a direct loan word from Arabic. We also find Acholi's *opii-opii* (slave-like), a term of Acholi origin that other Nilotic speakers share. While living in the Kisii cultural district, we learned that Abagusii were slaves of the Luo in Uyoma; sometime in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century, Omogusii and his children escaped and took refuge in today's Bogusii. Several other Bantu languages use the word gusii or guthii for 'slave.'

## 2 Brief history of oppression in East Africa

Treating oppression as universal, we must consider the unique geographical and historical factors that make it [oppression] particularly pronounced in East Africa for the last several centuries. Our own insights that do not appear in the literature as we articulate them here suggest as follows: Until the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century, a marginal climate, paucity of natural resources and barriers to human movement cut off the relatively small population of the interior from intercourse with outside communities. Most notable among the barriers were the forests on the West, the Nyika on the East and South, the Ethiopian escarpment on the North and the omnipresence of slavers coming from the North and East (Davidson, 1988). Until the mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century, it was very risky for anyone in the interior to try to travel outside without being captured, transported and sold. This contributed to a lack of technological development, which disadvantaged the local people who encountered aggressive outsiders with more efficient weapons. The replacement of this geo-technological disadvantage came in the form of oppressive colonisation by foreigners who were ignorant and arrogant (Were & Wilson, 1966). Besides weapons, they had the technological means to reify and disseminate the understanding that East Africans were lesser humans. The relief from the *de jure* oppression of the colonial period did not necessarily relieve the *de-facto* kinds of oppression, which continued unabated throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

Despite the fact that slavery was already abolished, there were slaves in Nairobi who came with their masters from Somalia in the early 1990s. In codified law, husbands and wives are almost equal, but not in customary law and Sharia law. Without 'slavery', we now have workplace oppression. We are telling about moments, events and scenes that we have witnessed or have affected us directly. Because all three authors have lived outside of Kenya, we have experienced contrasts and variations in culture from within other cultures and outside Kenyan culture. We have also been able to observe what governments and churches tell us and what people actually do. Throughout East Africa, there is an ongoing adjustment of custom to what the majority of people want as opposed to what we are told. We see this in the form of 'groundswell,' the process by which change comes through individuals defying convention (Pido, 2022).

## 3 Objective and review of related literature

The research and objective were shedding light on a phenomenon that we have observed since the 1960s but which seems to have largely escaped the attention of scholars. Our overall objective is to stimulate introspection, discussion, and debate among local Kenyans, as well as the diaspora and non-Kenyan observers. We have accessed several bodies of literature, including primatological and archaeological studies, ancient and recent histories, ethnographies and political scientific analyses. (Jolly, 1985; Morris, 1967; Pido, 2022; Pido et al., 2019).

The literature on oppression is both extensive and chimeric. It is far too extensive to refer to here and without losing sight of our main topic. As for oppression, specifically in Kenya, the literature on the colonial period and the slave trade encompasses a few aspects of the phenomenon and mostly in generality. We omit reference to this body of literature to keep the reader's mind free of the bias that might arise from breaking oppression into typologies.

#### **4 Discussion of findings**

In contrast to practice in other cultures, oppression, punishment, obstruction, and infliction of hardship appear to be prevalent in East Africa (Pido et al., 2019). In this regard, we need barely mention the long history of internal slavery (Davidson, 1988), or the nature of marriage, and gender relations. African traditional marriage contracts between patriarchal corporate lineages and clans are appalling to the Americans among us, while others take it as a given. We recall the mid-1990s when Somali women refugees divorced their husbands after discovering that they had the right to divorce their husbands in Scandinavia. Social hierarchy is in our DNA as humans; this is one reason why we rank and oppress other humans (Jolly, 1985). We can look at the large scale of entire societies, but we must also consider the small scale of interpersonal relationships. As designers, we notice the indirect use of oppression through user-hostile design.

Anomalies of power present choices to the more powerful, such as being kind, constructive, collaborative, or harsh, destructive, or disruptive. In particular, Muslims are admonished in the Qur'an and Hadith that if they cannot free their slaves, they should at least treat them well. No matter what religious, social or political restrictions we place on oppression, we still do it and this may explain why we define the oppressed as culpable, defective, dirty or less than human. In recent history, we can cite Hitler in Europe from 1933 to 1945 (Hitler, 1933). We can also go back to the Old Testament and cite both the Babylonian and Egyptian captivities as oppression of the nomadic Hebrews. Sedentary peoples tend to negatively define and assess pastoralist communities as an excuse to oppress them; we need only look around us in our own lifetimes to have seen this happening. We can look back to the 6th Century BCE and read Herodotus (Herodotus, 1992; Hartog, 1988). In explicit language, he tells us how the Greeks damned the Scythian nomads because they could not pin them down for tight control.

While sharing commonalities with all other humans, we have observed that East African postures of power have some unique and troubling characteristics. We are using our participant observations from the last half Century or so in the hope of stimulating academic introspection among colleagues and policymakers. Research that takes oppression into account with an aim to neutralise it can make important contributions to national development, especially Vision 2030. Perhaps the most insidious of all forms of oppression is slavery. We note that when a tribe of enslaved people was emancipated in about 1200 BCE, God gave them a set of rules that did not include a prohibition on enslaving and oppressing others as they had been enslaved and oppressed. When they wrote down their rules in Leviticus, they were clear that it was okay to enslave other peoples but not their own (Leviticus, 538–332 BC).

There is a long history of internal slavery throughout Africa and an equally long history of the exportation of humans as slaves from Eastern Africa (Davidson, 1988). The transatlantic slave trade from the 1500s to the early 1800s was numerically intense. The capture and exportation of slaves from the East African coast and interior was drawn out from a time before history was recorded until the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. There are pictures of this in Egyptian art going back at least 4000 years. We know from records in India that the Siddi community's sale and enslavement in Southern India goes back to at least the seventh Century. In the early 20<sup>th</sup>

Century, EE Evans Pritchard, writing about the Nuer people of the Sudan, pointed out that the Dinka and Nuer people were constantly at war, taking captives and enslaving them. So, many Nuer were Dinkas and many Dinkas were actually Nuer (Pritchard, 1940). The British claim that they ended the slave trade in the Indian Ocean Basin was propaganda aimed at justifying the colonial oppression of Africans.

From the early 1700s, there was a persistent anti-slavery movement in Europe and the Americas, resulting in the abolition of slavery in the British Empire by 1807 and the United States in 1863. However, abolition did not end slavery in all countries; some abolished it very recently. One of us knew a slave in the household of a Mauritanian diplomatic family in New York in the 1970s. The social and economic oppression of the descendants of slave populations is everywhere, especially in the US. Every day, the news media show us oppressors harming oppressed people caught on smartphones.

We can also examine how we treat our workers, fellow countries, and families. The heightened interest in American scholarship on the slavery period in that country has brought to our attention a piece of literature about enslavement and control over women. Booker T Washington's speech to The Atlanta Exposition of 1895 is included in his book "Up from Slavery" (Washington, 1907). He describes how oppressive dominant whites feminised the enslaved and post-emancipation black males. Anna Pochmara has written extensively on its connection to the Feminization of Black African American males (Pochmara, 2011). If enslavement and its aftermath can be paralleled with feminisation, then what can we say about women and marriage? In other places, marriage is a man-woman contract. In East Africa, customary marriage, historically and in present law, is *de jure*, a contract between two corporate lineages for the transfer of rights in a female from one to the other. Even in Christian, Muslim, Hindu and law, marriages are often actually based on agreements between the male lineages that have arranged the union. Among the rights transferred are labour, consortium, product and reproductive futures. There are two antitheses to this kind of arrangement in East Africa today. These are elopement or 'come we stay' unions and women's refusal to contract marriage at all.

One of the spinoffs of this kind of *de jure* type of arrangement is that the female person, now a wife, is under the physical, social, economic and spiritual control of her husband and his relatives. Another right, corollary to physical control, is the right to 'corporal punishment'. We use this term because it was the subject of an eye-opening early experience in April of 1968. During a conference at Karen College, participants were informed that the all-male Parliament had declined to outlaw wife-beating. Several years later, a member of Parliament stated, 'it is sweet to oppress' in response to a concern that had been raised about the oppression of women. None of us recorded it at the time, but we still recall it vividly. Kenyans often ask, "In America, does the man marry the woman, or does the woman marry the man?" The answer "We marry each other" often creates confusion. In several East African languages, the concept of marrying presupposes an entitlement to oppress or abuse a wife.

In the late '70s or early '80s, the daughter of a well-known politician from Western Province decided to marry the man she had been living happily with and had two children. On their wedding night, he beat her so severely that she nearly died. No one could figure out why he did that except that his community gave him the right to beat a woman only if she was an official wife. That community and several others explain this to their boys during the circumcision process. It is noteworthy that the only area in the world where men's life expectancy is higher than women's is the Western Province.

We have heard many explanations for Kenyan men's understanding that they are both entitled and obligated to beat a wife but not a girlfriend or any other female person. Some will argue that the woman likes it and that it proves he loves her. If this is true, then we are looking at the infliction of pain and harm on a loved one. In fact, we have often heard that some men will abuse their wives because of peer pressure and fear of being feminised. We know that male children are admonished to distance themselves from females, especially their mothers. In most communities, circumcision marks the moment when the young male must go and live in a separate house. The young male must disdain and refuse to touch or participate in anything or any activity that is deemed feminine. Part of the disdain for the feminine is aggressive action against females; wife-beating is a part of stating one's masculinity and perceived right to oppress the wife.

However, negating femaleness has a much broader range of manifestations. Making work harder for the female is one of these. In Lemek in the 1980s, the men refused to pay for the repair of a communal water tap. In the early 1990s, Nandi men boasted to a research team that their women knew exactly how to climb the rocky and slimy path up the hill carrying water. Out of earshot, the women told the team of broken kneecaps and other injuries incurred when they slipped on the path.

In some cases, men purport to be proud of their women for getting the work done under difficult conditions; little do they know they are oppressive. In others, men have stated to these authors that they want their women to be too exhausted at the end of the day to seek alternative male companionship. Some will even state that having paid the bride price, they want to get their money's worth by making the women work harder than necessary.

The anti-slavery movement was a massive effort to stop or mitigate oppression. There are at least two others that still impact us without completely solving the oppression problem. One is the organisation of labour, and the other is the women's liberation and empowerment movement. To simplify a very complex story, 19<sup>th</sup>-century governments began requiring improvements to mass housing, water supplies and sanitation, and worker access to amenities and open spaces. Karl Marx wrote both *Das Kapital* and the *Communist Manifesto*, two documents that exposed the plight of the workers and called for change. At the same time, several leaders began organising labour unions, which led to collective bargaining in the workplace. Immediately, the bourgeoisie demonised Marx, and a political divide sprang up between Capitalism and Communism. Both systems did little for the oppressed. Communists merely were ranting about the oppression of the workers, and the advocates of capitalism were accepting or denying their oppression by the ruling classes as normal.

Throughout all of this, people of colour, the poor and women continued to suffer oppression by moneyed males in power who controlled education and professional status. Then came the Women's Liberation Movement. Many people still believe that Women's Lib began in the late 1960s, but its roots were far deeper than the 1960s. There had already been many small struggles to relieve the patriarchal oppression of women. A notable milestone was the publication of 'A Vindication of the Rights of Women' by the British Mary Wollstonecraft in 1792. Throughout the 1800s, women in the workplace struggled to balance family and paid employment, often failing to do so. The two global wars of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century placed many women at a disadvantage because of the loss of male relatives and expulsion from the workplace by returning soldiers.

The long, hard struggles of the suffragettes notwithstanding, Kenya's Co-op societies and Tanzania's Ujamaa villages deliberately excluded wives from membership and inheritance.

However, women did most of the work for which men were paid. In Tanzania, if a husband died, his wife was expelled physically from the Ujamaa Village (Turshen, 1993). Again, in Western Kenya and probably other parts of the country, wives of coop members do the agricultural work while their husbands collect the money earned. We have heard from students that when women try to produce surplus crops, their husbands force them to hand the produce over to themselves. They then sell the produce to pay for new wives, thus dividing the first wife's land access. Students tell us that this process is often oppressive, if not violent and brutal.

We can consider the built-in notion of oppression in product and systems design. Every day, we grapple with Kenyan user-unfriendly design, several degrees of user-hostile design, and buys made in Kenya. Many of our design students believe that they have to make viewers struggle to understand their work. One of our favourites designed a roadside billboard with the text displayed sideways so that viewers would have to struggle to understand the message; such a design is inappropriate for the average passing driver or passenger. Even pedestrians may experience great difficulties in getting messages from such billboards.

At the 'kazi' level, we recall the university administrator who, within ten days of being appointed a dean, called an entire faculty together and ranted for over an hour about how she thought she should probably abolish some departments because the faculty were not working hard enough. Several years ago, salaries were delayed for more than two weeks after the end of the month for several months. A chair of the department sought to know why the delay was without notification; the authority responded with a dressing down for the chair. Non-Kenyan companies and institutions have different attitudes toward labour relations. Here, we are calling it 'management posture.' We witnessed a caretaker insisting that the worker should be able to get the job done from a standing position without regard to efficiency or comfort. Looking beyond Kenya, there is a video documentary illustrating the vastly different management postures of George Westinghouse and Thomas Edison (Bussler, 2013). Edison was oppressive to workers, while Westinghouse was humane. Samuel Gompertz, a labour leader, remarked that if all employers had been like Westinghouse, there would be no need for labour unions.

## 5 Conclusion

In the global picture, oppression has many manifestations; intergender is obnoxious but not the only one. We have observed over many years that the concept of oppression seems to permeate East African culture in ways that it does not elsewhere. With all the details, history and culture aside, we are talking about tiny, fine points and moments of oppression that, to us, indicated that oppression is ingrained in East African culture. We hope that this small will inform and stimulate discussion and debate

## 6 Recommendations

We propose a sui-epistemicidal approach to awareness and change of the dysfunctional aspects of the phenomena described. Kenyans may need to come to terms with other cultures that do not use oppression as a paradigmatic component in their daily lives. It may be painful, but we ought to realise that we are hurting ourselves by uncritically accepting user hostility in our culture. We should correct actions, knowledge, attitudes, and practices that need critical attention and adjustment.



## References

- Bussler, M. (2013). Westinghouse-112-minute film Inacom Entertainment [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8BUpF\\_h-IYDav](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8BUpF_h-IYDav) accessed August 20 2023
- Davidson, B. (1988). *Black Mother: The African Slave Trade*, Little Brown and Company, New York.
- Davidson, B. (1995). *Africa in History*, Simon and Schuster, New York.
- Pritchard, E. (1940). *The Nuer*. Pantianos Classics.
- Hartog, F. (1988). *The Mirror of Herodotus*, University of California Press, Los Angeles.
- Herodotus (1992). *The Histories* Edited by Walter Blanco and Jennifer T Roberts, NY, Norton and Company.
- Hitler, A. (1933). *Mein Kampf*. English version, Hurst and Blackett. London.
- Hadith. (2012, November 26). *Daily Hadith Online* <https://www.abuaminaelias.com/dailyhadith-online/2012/11/26/treat-slaves-well-free-them/>
- Holy Qur'an' Sura 59, (al-Ahzab), verses 58 -59.
- Jacobs, A. (1965). *The Traditional Political System of the Pastoral Maasai*, PhD Thesis, Nuffield College, Oxford.
- Jacobs, A. (1967). *A Chronology of the Pastoral Maasai*, Hadith, Vol 1. Nairobi.
- Jolly, A. (1985). *The Evolution of Primate Behavior*, Macmillan Publishing Company, New York.
- Levine, R., & Levine, B. (1966). Nyansongo: A Gusii Community in Kenya. In J & B Whiting (Ed.), *Harvard Six Cultures Series*, John Wiley, New York.
- Leviticus. Holy bible National Publishing Company. USA, 1978 Oduor, Reginald.
- Morris, D. (1967). *The Naked Ape*, Dell/Random House, New York.
- Pido, D. (1984) Sagacity. in Kajiado District Sociocultural Profile. Nairobi: Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning.
- Pido, D. (1987). *Maasai Art and Society*. PhD Thesis, Columbia University, Department of Anthropology.
- Pido, D. (2000). *Initiation Sponsors' Education Project*. In DFID Report, HAPAC Project, DFID, Nairobi.
- Pido, D. (2022). *Democracy as Falsehood*. In Oduor Reginald (Ed.), *Beyond Liberal Democracy in Africa Beyond Liberal Democracy in Africa*, Rowman and Littlefield, New York.
- Pido, D. (2023). *The Collective Sage: Maasai Philosophy and Resilience*. In Kresse Kai and Oriare, N. (Ed.). *African Sage Philosophy Revisited*, Lexington Press, Washington DC.
- Pido, O. (2022). *Groundswell, an Unavoidable Democracy*. In Oduor Reginald (Ed.), *Beyond Liberal Democracy in Africa*, Rowman and Littlefield, New York.
- Pido, D., Khamala, M., & Pido, O. (2019). *Decolonizing 'Technology' in Kenyan Higher Education and Implications for Development*. In Maurice, N. Amutabi (Ed.), *Sustainable Development in Africa*, Center for Democracy, Research and Development Nairobi.
- Pido, D., Khamala, M., & Pido, O. (2019). *The Past, Present, and Future of Social Design in Kenyan Higher Education*. In Maurice, N. Amutabi (Ed.), *Sustainable Development in Africa*, Center for Democracy, Research and Development, Nairobi.
- Pochmara, A. (2011). *Making of the New Negro*, Amsterdam University Press, Amsterdam.
- Siddi. Wikipedia <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Siddi> accessed August 20, 2023.
- Turshen, M. (1993). *Women's Lives and Public Policy: The International Experience*, Greenwood Press, Westport.
- Washington, B. T. (1907). *The Atlanta Exposition Speech*. In *Up from Slavery*, Doubleday Page and Company, New York.
- Were, G., & Wilson, P. M. (1966). *East Africa Through 1000 Years*, Evans Brothers, London
- Wollstonecraft, M. (1792). *A Vindication of the Rights of Women*, London.