

1. Record Nr.	UNISA996309149603316
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Titolo	Youth and experiences of ageing among Maa : models of society evoked by the Maasai, Samburu, and Chamus of Kenya / / Paul Spencer
Pubbl/distr/stampa	Warsaw, [Poland] ; ; Berlin, [Germany] : , : De Gruyter Open, , 2014 ©2014
ISBN	3-11-037727-6
Descrizione fisica	1 online resource (plates, 196 pages) : illustrations, tables, charts, maps
Disciplina	306.08996
Soggetti	Maasai (African people) Youth - Africa
Lingua di pubblicazione	Inglese
Formato	Materiale a stampa
Livello bibliografico	Monografia
Nota di bibliografia	Includes bibliographical references and indexes.
Nota di contenuto	Front matter -- Contents -- Introduction -- 1 Reminiscence and the Manipulation of Experience -- Part I: The Maasai Age System (1976-77) -- 2 The Natural Substructure of Age-set Systems and the Social Construction of Ageing among Maasai -- 3 Stratification and Social Mobility: Patterns of Inequality among Maasai and Hindus -- 4 Anger, Comradeship and Age-set Exogamy among Maasai: an Elaboration of Alliance Theory -- Part II: Samburu Ritual and Cosmology (1957-60, 1962) -- 5 Arenas of Dance among Samburu -- 6 Anxiety and the Interpretation of Ritual among Samburu -- 7 The Transfiguration of Samburu Religion -- Part III: Indigenous Democracy and Change Among the Chamus (1959, 1977) -- 8 The Evolution of Indigenous Knowledge among Chamus - or Global Diffusion? -- 9 Maa Democracy, Development and Alternative Realities: an Open Letter -- References -- List of Maps -- List of Figures -- List of Tables -- List of Charts -- List of Plates -- Subject Index -- Name Index
Sommario/riassunto	The Maa of East Africa are a cluster of related pastoral peoples who share a social organization based on age. This groups men into life-long cohorts from their initiation in youth, regardless of family wealth. Historically, this type of pre-market society has been described in every continent, but East Africa provides the principal surviving region of age-based societies, among whom the Maasai are the best known. In

this volume, comparison between three branches of Maa highlights different aspects of their society: the dynamics of power with age and gender among the Maasai, of ritual performance and belief among the Samburu, and of historical change among the Chamus. Here it is argued that understanding another culture can only be approached through models derived in the first instance from the representations conveyed by members of that culture. The social anthropologist may then elaborate these images through the choice of analytical parallels, even extending to other disciplines and personal experience. Each chapter in this volume views Maa institutions through a different lens, exploring models relevant to a comprehensive analysis of their social life.

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