

From Boma to Big City: Transformation in the Social Structure of Ngorongoro Maasai

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Abstract

This study takes a closer look at how and why in recent years a growing number of Maasai men and women are moving into urban areas. The study addresses the following questions: a) what factors are causing the Maasai to go to urban areas? and b) how is the community affected by people going to urban areas? This study was conducted in the area surrounding Endulen village within the Ngorongoro Conservation Area (NCA) and in Dar es Salaam city. One hundred sixty eight interviews were conducted with two hundred and five participants of varying ages, gender, education levels and contact levels with cities and towns.

The study demonstrates that the Maasai are going to cities to get jobs, sell beaded jewellery and traditional medicinal substances in response to severe poverty including lack of cattle and economic benefits from ecotourism. It is observed that such phenomena are on the rise and they reflect an increasing awareness among Maasai at large that other sources of income must be sought to counter-balance the impoverishment caused by the rapidly decreasing performance of their traditional cattle economy. As such, it is both one creative response of individuals to mechanisms of modernity and globalization, including a highly visible as well as greatly visible collective attempt to carve out new and more positive niches for their ethnic identity.

The community is being affected in many ways, including a gap in the workforce, an increase in communicable diseases, changes in gender roles and effects of inter-ethnic group marriages. The Maasai have structured age sets with corresponding social and gender roles. Altogether, the Maasai are currently experiencing a shift in social and gender roles due to many *ilmurran* or *morani* being in cities.

Introduction

The Maasai are Maa-speaking pastoralists currently living in northern Tanzania and southern Kenya. Because of the Maasai's pastoral lifestyle and their insistence on maintaining their traditions, Maasai culture is one of the most studied cultures in Africa. In particular, researchers have been captivated by dresses, personal adornment including warriorhood of the Maasai warriors, the *ilmurran* or *morani* and with practices of circumcision as well as pastoralism. Many believe that, "...uncowed by their neighbors, colonial conquest, or modernization, [the Maasai] stand in proud mute testimony to a vanishing African world..." (Spear, 1993:1) and that their culture should be studied and

preserved.

However, change is part of culture and is necessary for the longevity of peoples' beliefs and practices. Without change, a culture becomes stagnant and eventually disappears. Currently, with modernization and globalization on the rise including a changing world view and economy, the Maasai, along with all other peoples, are being forced to adjust aspects of their culture in order to survive. The adjustments that they are making are many including changes in subsistence strategies, settlement patterns, sending their children to school and even social as well as gender relations. In addition, the Maasai are beginning to move from their traditional lands into urban areas. Therefore, it is important to study the Maasai while they perpetuate this transition in order to discover how they will

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redefine what it means to be Maasai. This study will show that the Maasai are going to cities and towns because of abject poverty. This is affecting their culture as well as communities by reducing the number of people in societies and hence, causing a shift in traditional social and gender roles and responsibilities.

Background to NCA and the Maasai of Ngorongoro

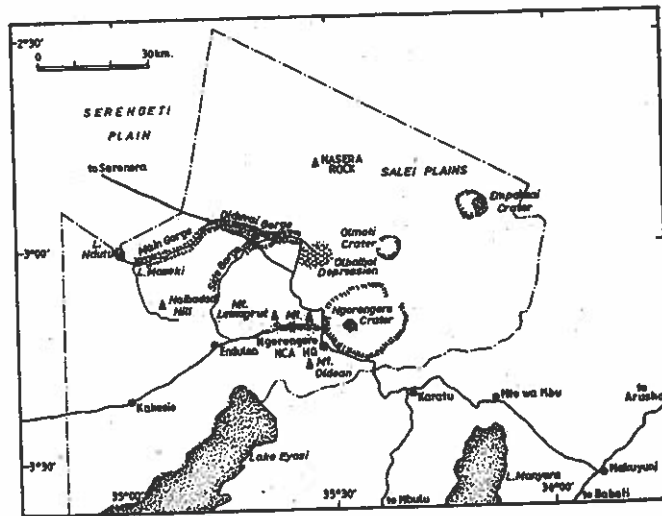
This study was conducted in the area surrounding Endulen village within the Ngorongoro Conservation Area (NCA, Figure 1). The NCA may be viewed as a continuation of Serengeti National Park (SENAPA). It was established in 1959 as a multiple land use area designed to promote tourism, conservation of wildlife and other natural resources as well as interests of indigenous resident pastorals (NCAA GMP, 1996). The NCA is unique in the world for its scenic beauty, spectacular wildlife and important cultural heritage sites of Olduvai Gorge and Laetoli. One breathtaking feature of the NCA is the Ngorongoro Crater. This is a collapsed caldera of a once massive volcano. The caldera's floor is about 18 km in diameter, forming a circular enclosed plain of about 250 km² (NCAA GMP, 1996; Homewood and Rodgers, 1991). A soda lake, several natural springs and swamps characterize the caldera plain.

Also, the NCA harbors a large population of Maasai pastorals living on traditional cattle and small stock husbandry. Currently, approximately 45,000 Maasai reside within the NCA and have around 310,000 head of livestock including goats, sheep, and cattle. Although archaeological evidence indicates that pastoralists have lived in present-day Maasailand since 2,500 years ago (Bower and Chadderdon, 1986), the Maasai are relatively newcomers to the area. Exactly when the Maasai moved into the region they occupy today is currently debated. *Maa* is a branch of a Nilotic linguistic group and the Maasai are believed to be one group of descendents of the

Plains Nilotes who migrated from the Ethiopian highlands around 1,000 AD (Homewood and Rodgers, 1991; Sommer and Vossen 1993). Other scholars, however, contend that *Maa* speaking peoples did not begin to arrive in Kenya's Rift Valley until the C17th or C18th AD

Figure 1: Map of Ngorongoro Conservation Area (NCA) showing the research site (Endulen village)

(Sutton, 1993). The Maasai were originally agropastoralists, cultivating sorghum and millet



along with raising cattle as well as small livestock. However, as they moved from the Ethiopian highlands down through the Rift Valley they displaced the indigenous populations. It was during that period of movement and displacement of indigenous populations that Maasai identity and "pure" pastoralism emerged (Spear, 1993; Sutton, 1993). Since then, most Maasai have been "purely" pastoral nomads, keeping their transhumance patterns of following good pastures and not establishing permanent settlements (Homewood and Rodgers, 1991).

The Maasai social structure is based on two institutions: clans and age-groups (Homewood and Rodgers, 1991). The former divides society vertically into groups of clans. The clan structure is based on the assumption of common origin from a mythical ancestor. The latter divides society horizontally, unifying members of all clans who are of the same social

age. In particular, the age-group structure unifies all male Maasai of the same social age. Women do not formally belong to this structure. This traditional system of clan and age sets provides the framework for social and economic structure of the Maasai (Homewood and Rodgers, 1991).

The Maasai live in a homestead (*boma* in Kiswahili; *enkang* in Maa). Traditionally, a Maasai homestead is a group of huts arranged in a circle (Homewood and Rodgers, 1991; Ole Saitoti and Beckwith, 1980). The huts are built around central kraals for livestock. The Maasai are polygamous whereby each wife has her own hut and a herd of cattle. A three-meter high acacia fence surrounds the hut. The fence protects people and livestock from predators such as lions, leopards and hyenas. Multiple families who may or may not be related to each other dwell in each *boma*. The *boma* may have one or more entrances through which livestock enter and leave (Homewood and Rodgers, 1991).

Research Problem and Questions

Although the Maasai consider themselves as "people of the cattle", engaging in a "purely" pastoral lifestyle, in reality, many Maasai now practice a mixed economy. Through time, they have found it increasingly difficult to subsist solely from their livestock and therefore, have adopted agriculture, selling of medicinal substances and beaded jewellery including a search for employment in cities and towns so as to supplement their subsistence system. Increasing uncertainties of a "pure" pastoral system have caused this situation. Living solely on livestock, a herder is confronted with a range of risks including increase in animal diseases, deteriorating water infrastructure, and reduced access to grazing range. In order to practice a full time pastoralism, access to a water source and wet as well as dry seasonal pastures is very critical for the herder. Nonetheless, Maasai access to the necessary range of pastoral resources have been greatly diminished following creation of commercial farms, ranches, national parks and game reserves that began in the second half of the

20th century (Homewood and Rodgers, 1991; Spear, 1993;). Now, the pastoral movement of Maasai of Ngorongoro is restricted by conservation boundaries of SENAPA and NCA. This limited movement is compressing the Maasai herds on restricted grazing areas causing these to become overexploited (Johnsen, 1997). This fact, together with the ban on burning grazing ranges enforced by NCA Authority, have increased livestock diseases.

Traditionally, the Maasai have burned grazing ranges to control tick borne diseases and increase the quality and quantity of grazing land. Nonetheless, in 1970s, the NCA Authority banned grass burning as an activity detrimental to the environment. This ban has resulted in a decrease in the quality of grazing land and an increase in the rate of tick-borne diseases, both of which had previously been controlled by periodic burning (Homewood and Rodgers, 1991; Johnsen, 1997). Today, passage of livestock infection is easy as many Maasai herds are grazing in the same areas. As a result of these constraints, the Ngorongoro Maasai have traditionally turned to cultivation to supplement their pastoral foods or re-build a herd devastated by diseases or drought (Johnsen, 1997). Nonetheless, in 1975, NCA Authority passed a legislation that prohibited cultivation (Århem, 1985a; 1985b), making an important supplemental food resource unavailable to the Ngorongoro Maasai. Following Maasai protests against the ban and insistence on farming, the NCAA lifted up the ban on cultivation in 1992 and allowed the Maasai to undertake small-scale cultivation around their *bomas*. Food resulting from cultivation is playing an important role in supplementing the diet of Ngorongoro Maasai (McCabe, *et al.*, 1995). However, through time, small-scale farming around *bomas* has transformed into large-scale cultivation by non-Maasai leaving in Ngorongoro and by Maasai businessmen as well as women who employ non-Maasai to cultivate large farms. As a result, in the later part of 2001, the NCAA began to seriously reconsider prohibiting cultivation once again, as they believe it to

directly interfere with conservation. The Maasai have protested to that whereby a consensus was reached in late 2002, allowing only Maasai to cultivate farms not greater than one acre in size around their *bomas* (Mr. Koromo, NCA Endulen Zonal Officer 2002, pers. comm.).

In addition, apart from beginning to change their subsistence strategies and settlement patterns, the Maasai are also going to school in much greater numbers than ever before. In his autobiography, Tepilit ole Saitoti (1986:53) reports that in the past, "...school to the Maasai was a bad thing, a place where children were taught alien ideas incompatible with Maasai values, a place where people were indoctrinated and got lost...". Although Maasai resisted sending their children to school for fear of losing them to Western ideas and cultures, they also resisted because children were needed to help in cattle herding and maintain the *boma*. However, in more recent years, "...school has become an economic plus, as those who are educated secure good jobs and contribute to the economic well-being of the entire family..." (ole Saitoti, 1986:55).

In the face of decreasing economic success of pastoralism, the Ngorongoro Maasai and other Maasai are responding in several ways. Not only are they adjusting their subsistence and settlement strategies and beginning to go to school in greater numbers, but also Maasai are now owning cultural *bomas* for tourists, selling medicinal substances and beaded jewellery and are going to urban areas to secure jobs. Twenty years ago it was rare to see energetic Maasai men and women away from their traditional lands. Therefore, this study addresses the following questions: a) what factors are causing the Ngorongoro Maasai to go to urban areas? and b) how is the community affected by people going to urban areas?

From these questions we developed three hypotheses to be tested by data collected.

H1: Growing economic pressures from limits on pastoralism is the main factor causing Maasai to go to cities.

H2: An increase in western influence through education is the main factor

causing Maasai to go to cities.

H3: There is no very large effect on the communities, besides personal effects such as emotional stress.

These research questions are significant because the Maasai have never before gone to cities in large numbers. No previous research has been done on the specific topic of the Maasai going to cities. Therefore, this study will begin the process of examining causes and effects of this move, setting the groundwork for future long-term research works. Furthermore, this paper will address the issue of whether the Maasai are still "people of the cattle", engaging in a "purely" pastoral lifestyle as they traditionally consider themselves or they are in a transition period. It is very important to study the Maasai during this transitional period as they begin to re-define and renovate their views of themselves including their world.

Study Site and Methods

The study was conducted with Maasai living in Endulen Ward, NCA between October 8 and November 5, 2001 and in Dar es Salaam between April 18 and May 28, 2003. In NCA, the research site was centered around Endulen village on the southwestern slopes of Mt. Lemagrut and encompassing the surrounding villages within 20 km (Figure 1). This area extends from the western and southern plains of Osinoni at an elevation of about 1600 m a.s.l. eastward into the Ngorongoro highlands to an elevation of about 2,600 m a.s.l.

The study site was chosen based on the fact that it would be possible to interview a large sample of traditional Maasai without excessive travel. Currently, there are approximately 1,000 Maasai living within the study area (Godfrey ole Mushumba, personal comm., 2003). Therefore, a statistically significant sample would have included hundreds of participants. However, due to time constraints, it was not practicable to attain this number. We developed a sampling frame, which is a breakdown of the population based on different combinations of independent variables (see also LeCompte and Schensul, 1999). The sampling frame (Table 1) is based on variables

that might influence a participant's views about people moving to urban centers such as gender, age and education level. The sampling frame consisted of 98 combinations of variables, each representing a different possible viewpoint. However, since we did not know participants' education level before interviewing them, it was difficult to fill the sampling frame. In addition, many Maasai can only estimate their age to within 10 years, making it difficult to exactly determine age distribution.

Table 1: Grouped responses to two questions

Q1: Why are people going to the city?:

R1: Poverty

- 1) not enough cattle
- 2) hunger
- 3) many troubles
- 4) to sell cows
- 5) to sell beadwork
- 6) to sell traditional medicines
- 7) to get a job

R2: Personal

- 1) contact with those returning
- 2) hear of city ways
- 3) nothing else to do in village
- 4) want to know what it is like

R3: Don't know

Q2: How is the community affected by people going to the city?:

R1: Someone else must do work

- 1) no one to herd cows
- 2) no one to construct or repair *boma*
- 3) no one to take cattle to water
- 4) no one to defend cattle
- 5) no one to go long distances
- 6) no one to take people to the hospital
- 7) no one to cultivate
- 8) no one to sit with girls
- 9) no one to start/stop fires

R2: Personal

- 1) lonely
- 2) go hungry while they are away
- 3) worry about family members and friends in the city
- 4) feel bad and miss them
- 5) inter-tribal marriage
- 6) concern about diseases

R3: No affect

R4: Don't know

Since the Maasai live in *bomas*, which are settlements that belong to a family group, it is uncommon to have access to many Maasai together, except during ceremonies and celebrations. Therefore, we conducted many of the interviews at medical outreach clinics conducted by Endulen Hospital. Endulen Hospital runs outreach ante-natal as well as post-natal clinics that involve members of staff to travel daily to *bomas* in Endulen and nearby villages to give vaccinations and perform

medical checkups. At the clinic sites, it was a satisfactory way to interview many Maasai, both women and men, as they would gather at the clinic for treatment or examination. In addition to clinics, informants were chosen at random from Endulen village, nearby *bomas* and at the market places based on their ability and willingness to participate in this study.

During the four weeks of fieldwork in Endulen, 67 interviews were conducted with 104 participants. Of the 67 interviews, 47 of them were with individual people and the other 20 were comprised of groups of 2 to 5 individuals. Group interviews were conducted because many people, especially women, were uncomfortable being interviewed alone. During group interviews, however, one or two people usually dominated the conversation and therefore, interviews may not reflect opinions of the whole group. All interviews except for one were conducted with the service of a translator. One participant had gone to college and was fluent in English and Kiswahili so there was no need for translation. Finally, 101 interviews were conducted in Dar es Salaam to determine whether Maasai currently living and working in urban areas have different views from those who are not. Only those coming from Ngorongoro District, Arusha Region were sampled for the study.

Data was collected primarily through semi-structured interviews (Bernard, 1995) because informants and translators had busy schedules. This imposed time constraints and made semi-structured interviews preferable since we were more assured that the questions of interest would be answered. Also, our informants were uncomfortable talking freely and preferred having questions to answer. Therefore, we used a set of questions as a guide but the interviews usually proceeded without need for a questionnaire. Respondents were encouraged to expand on issues they found important. Questions were designed to collect information on factors that are causing Maasai to move into urban areas, how communities that they are leaving behind are affected and their impressions of people who have gone to cities.

Before each interview, we told participants a few things about what we were doing and about ourselves. Then, we asked them about the use of the tape recorder. Where informants' were uncomfortable with it, detailed notes were taken instead of recording because the informants' feelings are more important than recording every word. In addition, we promised all respondents' confidentiality of information before beginning the interviews. In order to ensure that this was maintained, respondents were listed and referred to only by code, we kept a master list.

After we finished asking questions, each participant was given the opportunity to ask us questions as well. This was to prevent people from seeing this study as a one-sided exchange in which we were in control. In addition, it allowed us to talk freely about issues in which they were interested and gave us the opportunity to ask them additional questions in a more casual way.

Field Results and Data Analysis

The data collected consists of information from interviews with 205 informants during 168 interviews. The sample consist 110 women and 95 men of different ages, education levels, and history of contact with cities. Figures 2, 3 and 4 show the distribution of age, education level

and history based on sex for the sample population. For age, there were 24 men and 12 women who were between 16 and 25 years old, 59 men and 84 women who were between 26 and 40 years old, and there were 12 men and 14 women who were over 40 years old (Figure 2). Regarding education level, 36 men and 87 women had not been to school, 26 men and 18 women had been to school for fewer than seven years, 28 men and 5 women had completed seven years of primary school, while 3 men had been to secondary school, and only 2 men had been to college (Fig. 3). As for history of contact with cities, 32 men and 12 women had been to cities and returned, 12 men and 42 women had never been to cities, 6 women had family members in cities, and 51 men and 50 women were in the city during this study (Fig. 4). History of contact with cities was coded for ease of reference (see Appendix A).

Fig. 2: Age distribution of sample population based on sex

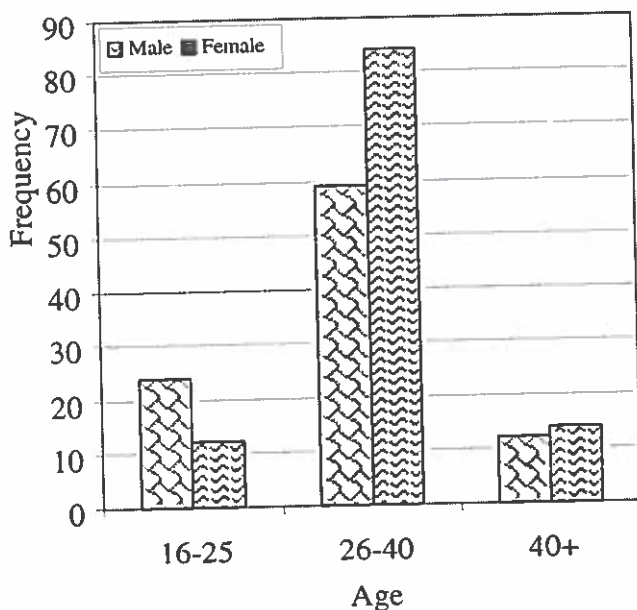
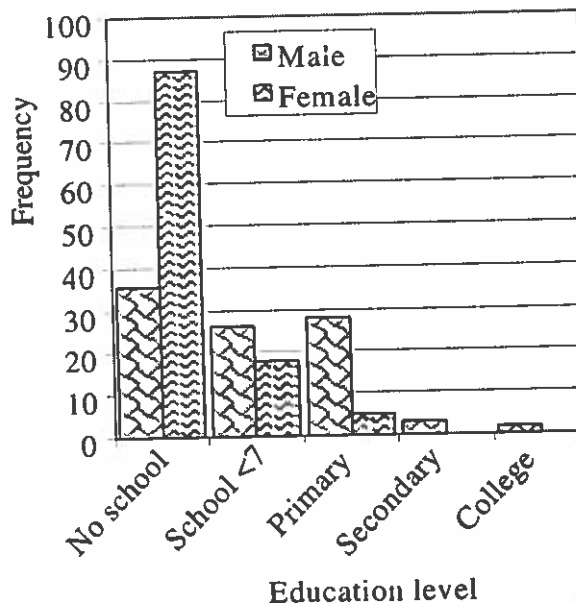


Fig. 3: Distribution of education levels of sample population based on sex



We grouped responses to the questions of why are people going to the city? and, how is the community affected by people going to urban areas? (Table 1). These groupings are based on similarity of meaning and common themes of responses. After grouping, we coded these responses and the responses to the additional question: what will the culture be or has it been

changed as a result of people going to urban areas?

they do not know what affects are (Fig. 6). Finally, only 47 or 23.00% of participants thought that going to urban areas would change or has changed Maasai culture, whereas 133 or 65.00% thought that culture would not be changed and 25 or 12.00% people did not know (Fig. 7).

Fig. 4: History of contact with urban areas of sample population based on sex

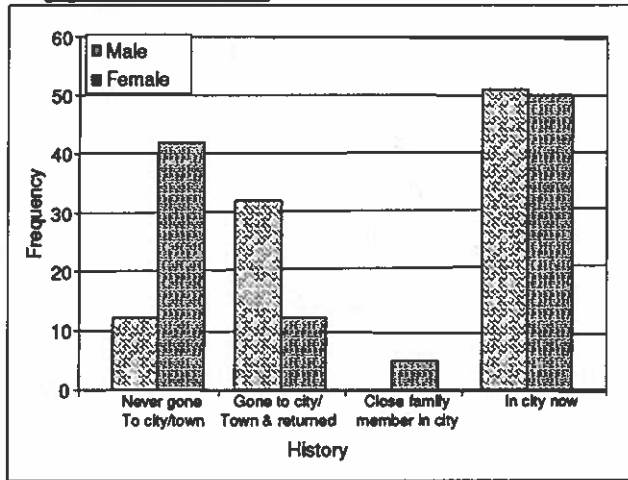
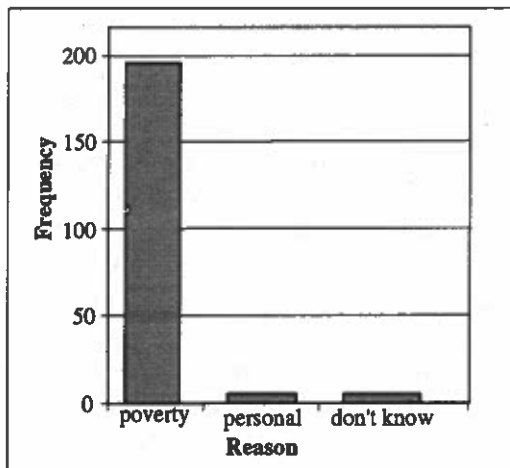


Fig. 5: Distribution of responses to question: Why are people going to urban areas?



Out of the 205 respondents, 196 or 95.60% cited poverty as the reason that people are moving to urban areas. In addition, five (2.40%) said that people move to urban areas because of personal interests, and four (2.00%) said that they do not know why people are going to urban areas (Fig 5).

Regarding how the communities are affected by people going to urban areas, 169 or 82.40% said that the effect on the community is that work must be done by someone else, 30 or 14.60% said that there is no effect on the community, three or 1.50% said that there are personal effects, and three or 1.50% said that

Fig. 6: Distribution of responses to question: How does people going to Urban areas affect the community?

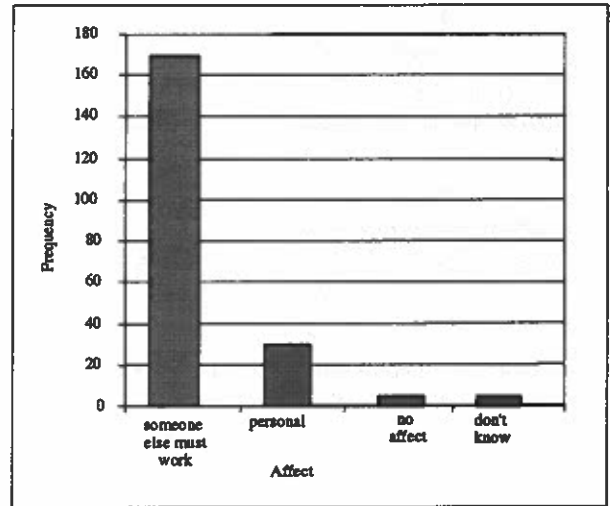
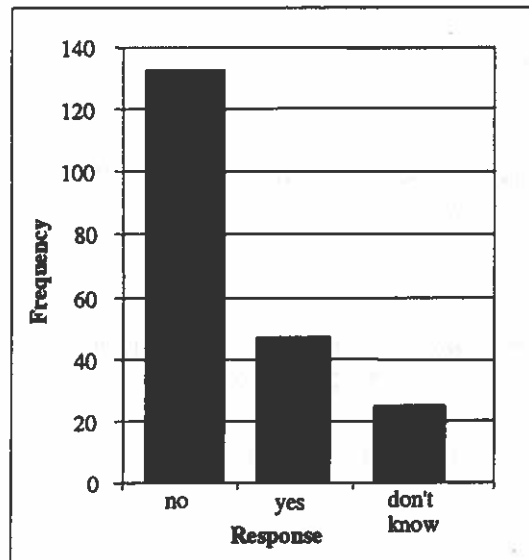


Fig. 7: Distribution of responses to question: Will Maasai culture change as a result of people going to urban areas?



Discussion

This study addresses two questions: a) what factors are causing the Ngorongoro Maasai to go to urban areas and b) how is the community

affected by people going to urban areas? We hypothesized that growing economic stress from limits on the pastoral economy and increase in western influence through education are the main factors causing Maasai to go to cities. Moreover, we hypothesized that there is not a big effect on the community, besides personal effects such as emotional stress. In response to the question of why people are going to cities, 196 out of 205 participants said that people are going to cities because of poverty. "...Poverty is the force and is caused by lack of cattle due to diseases that kill them. In addition, now nutrition of calves is bad, so they are dying." (Resp. no. 27). This supports our original hypothesis. Poverty is a result of Maasai no longer having sufficient cattle to support themselves. The reasons for loss of cattle are difficult to determine. Responses included new diseases, diseases from ticks, diseases that kill calves, cattle are vaccinated but lose their resistance and effects from prolonged drought conditions. With already weakened cattle herds due to diseases, they greatly suffer from severe losses during dry seasons. As a result, some cattle cannot survive the first few days of the following rain seasons.

As the Maasai population within the NCA continues to grow, there is a corresponding growth in the population density of both people and herds. This higher concentration of cattle combined with limited movement increases infections from diseases and heightens the adverse effects of drought. In response to losing many cattle, the Maasai have begun going to urban areas to seek for jobs. "...I went to Mwanza to get a job because nowadays there are not enough cattle and my family depends on *ilmurran/morani* like me to support them..." (Resp. no. 35). Most people who go to cities only go so as to get temporary jobs and then return to their families. Some go to cities for only a few months and then return with money that they have earned. Others stay for many years, returning periodically to check on their families and herds. Since the Maasai are known for being fierce warriors, many employers prefer to hire them rather than people from other ethnic groups for jobs such as watchmen

and security guards. Apart from being just watchmen and security guards, other employers (for example, tour operators) hire Maasai *ilmurran/moran* as subjects of tourist attractions at camping sites and Head Offices. Accordingly, it is not difficult for a Maasai to find a job in the city. In fact, the Maasai have dominated the watchmen and security guard market in Tanzania, completely replacing the once famous Makonde people.

The community views those who go to urban areas, get money, and return as good people. However, those who go greatly dislike urban areas. This is because while in cities and towns, they worry about thieves, being hit by cars or being killed. Also, they think that people from other ethnic groups dislike them (Maasai) and so do not treat them well. "...I don't like the city because life is not good and there are people of other ethnic groups there, who call us 'reds' because of the color of our clothes..." (Resp. no. 29).

Although the major reason for going to urban centers is to get jobs because of poverty, others go to cities for personal reasons (see Table 1). For the most part, the community views this as negative because these people often do not return home. They drink too much alcohol, get into debts, get involved with prostitutes or steal money or property from employers. "...Some go to get money but others only to become 'Waswahili' (non-Maasai people leaving in towns) and don't know why they are re there and it's a big problem..." (Resp. no. 95). "...Those who don't come home use money to pay prostitutes and buy alcohol. They don't care for us anymore..." (Resp. no. 06). Other personal reasons for going to cities include selling cattle and using the money to buy maize, oil and seeds for their gardens. They will always take their cows to Nairobi to sell because they get higher prices and make more money on the exchange rate between Kenyan and Tanzanian shillings. Some go because they are businessmen, mostly shopkeepers, and they buy supplies in bulk at low prices to sell in their stores. Finally, some people have go to cities and towns to take sick people to hospitals or

because they are sick themselves. These people do not stay long or do not desire to have much contact with cities and towns.

The majority of people going to cities are *ilmurran/morani*, Maasai warriors between ages of 18 and 30 (constituting 73%). Traditionally, the role of an *ilmurran/morani* was to protect cattle from lions and cattle raiders. They were also members of the community who raided cattle from other ethnic groups, who were sent long distances when it was necessary and carried sick people to hospital. Other responsibilities were to entertain younger girls and eventually marry them. Families have lost many cattle and the government has relatively controlled cattle raiding. As such, the *morani* are now going to cities and towns not only because they are most likely going to get jobs but also because there is nothing for them to do at their homes any more. Some women go to cities to sell their beadworks and traditional medicines, but they do not usually stay very long.

Although going to cities is a relatively recent phenomenon, the Ngorongoro Maasai already are beginning to recognize effects within their communities. The most frequent response to the question of how the community is affected by people going to cities is that someone else has to do the work of those who leave (see Table 1). Informants who still have livestock herds found it difficult to compensate for those who have gone to cities. "...It is bad because there is no one to keep cows from being stolen and there are only elders left to graze as well as move cows..." (Resp. no. 72). "...The community is affected because everything in the community depends on *ilmurran/moran*- grazing cattle, going far from home, and building *boma* fences..." (Resp. no. 35). Now, women, children, and elders have to make up for this loss in the workforce. "...Elders who should only be sitting under trees talking now have to take cows to graze. It's not right anymore..." (Resp. no. 05). In addition, many are finding it difficult to get enough food to eat while waiting for people to return from cities and towns. "...While we try to wait for someone to come from the city we

don't have anything to eat, so it's very hard..." (Resp. no. 45). "...Our *ilmurran/morani* need to go and work because we don't have enough cows and need money for food but we have hunger while they are gone. It is hard..." (Resp. no. 102).

The Ngorongoro Maasai also identified personal effects of people going to cities. Participants expressed concern that those going to cities are sleeping with people from other ethnic groups and they might be bringing back sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) such as gonorrhea, syphilis and herpes. The pattern does not preclude HIV/AIDS. However, it is hard to tell if there has been a rise in STDs since many Maasai do not know the symptoms. Normally, they do not use hospitals and therefore, they are never diagnosed. Nonetheless, some AIDS cases among the Maasai have been reported at Endulen Hospital.

Another impact that people going to cities is having on the community is that of inter-ethnic marriages. The community views this as a negative phenomenon. "...In mixed marriages wives don't know our taboos or traditions so the husband changes and that affects the whole community..." (Resp. no. 26). "...Many who go to cities and towns marry those from other ethnic groups and it's not good because they will not understand our culture and children won't know what ethnic group to follow..." (Resp. no. 36). Finally, while people are away in cities and towns, their families and friends miss them and worry about them a lot. "...It's bad that so many people are going to cities and towns because the *bomas* are empty now and women and children are suffering at home..." (Resp. no. 37). No views were ever expressed to support our hypothesis that people were frequently going to cities because of education. In fact, 58.4% of 101 respondents who were in Dar es Salaam during the study had not been to school, 31.7% had not completed primary school, 8.9% had completed primary school and only 1.00% was doing college studies.

In response to the question of whether the culture has been or will be changed, 78.00% out of 205 participants said that it would not.

"...Going to the city won't change Maasai culture because people in villages are keeping the traditions..." (Resp. no. 69). "...Nothing about our culture can change because they only go to get money, not to change our culture..." (Resp. no. 85). In addition, there were views expressed that although the culture would not change, there would be developments in thinking and behavior such as more modern homes and clothes including new ideas about bathing and eating. "...Culture won't change because Maasai culture is difficult to change but there will be some small developments to help us..." (Many respondents in Dar es Salaam). Everyone who mentioned the developments viewed them as positive, only making people's lives easier and more comfortable without negatively impacting Maasai traditions. However, 22% participants said that the culture is and will be changed as a result of people going to cities. "...Things are starting to change and develop slowly but they are good changes..." (Resp. no. 44 and 200). "...There is a possibility that the whole culture can be changed. It is very complicated..." (Resp. no. 104).

Large numbers of people are going to cities to get jobs as a solution to their economic hardships because there are few alternatives. "...Going to town is the best and only way to replace or supplement our cattle economy..." (Resp. no. 35). Some are starting businesses, but few are successful. Other options include keeping bees and selling honey, getting temporary jobs at the NCA headquarters and nearby tourist camping sites, getting loans and cultivation. Although the Maasai are mainly pastoralists, they have been forced to supplement their diets with agricultural products since they no longer have enough cattle to support themselves. "...When I was young we were only pastoralists but now we have to cultivate to survive..." (Resp. no. 40). Cultivation in the NCA began again in 1992, in response to the growing numbers of poor and destitute Maasai. Now, the Ngorongoro Conservation Area Authority (NCAA) is claiming that the privilege has been abused, that too much land has been cultivated and that

people are moving into the conservation area for the sole purpose of growing crops (Maigisa, pers. comm., 2001). The balance between conservation of natural and human resources is threatened. If cultivation is continued, it may harm the natural environment and animal habitats. However, if cultivation is banned again, the Maasai may not survive. They will have to sell cows to buy grain, causing them to have even fewer cattle than they do now. "...If the NCAA doesn't let us have gardens, we won't have enough food and we will die..." (Resp. no. 21). The Maasai have protested this action and a consensus was reached in late 2002, allowing only Maasai to cultivate farms not greater than one acre in size around their *bomas* (Mr. Koromo, NCA Endulen Zonal Officer 2002, pers. comm.).

Although there are few short-term solutions to poverty alleviation besides getting jobs in cities and towns, the Ngorongoro Maasai believe that education is the best long-term solution. In the past, the Maasai did not send their children to school. "...A long time ago, Maasai had enough cows and enough to eat so we didn't see a reason to send our kids to school or to get jobs..." (Resp. no. 35). Also, children were needed to work with the herds and help maintain the *bomas*. Now that primary school is free, the Maasai are able to afford it and they are realizing benefits that their community can gain from being educated. "...Our time to raid cattle is over. Now it is time for pen and paper as I see the pen as another form of food these days..." (Resp. no. 19). Some of the positive effects that education could have on the Maasai community include having people employed as teachers, doctors, community workers and so on. "...It's good that Maasai are going to school because it can help us with communication and we can get doctors and teachers who understand our culture and can help us..." (Resp. no. 24).

The Maasai follow structured age-sets with associated social roles. However, with *ilmurran/morani* going to cities in big numbers, this is being threatened as social roles shift and change. Despite the fact that the majority of participants said that culture will not be

changed, through other statements and responses, we believe that this is a large change that is taking place right now. Each age-set has certain responsibilities and expectations. The age-sets are not fixed at certain ages, but vary depending on when certain ceremonies are held, such as circumcision and initiation ceremonies. Boys not yet *ilmurran/morani* have the responsibility of looking after the herds and taking them to graze. However, they are accompanied by one or more *ilmurran/morani*, who will defend the cattle and make sure that everything is running smoothly. The *ilmurran/morani* do not have any strict responsibilities but they are generally responsible for protecting the community from any harm or hardship. Then, elders do not have to work, as by the time that they have reached that age, they have completed their duties in the community and are rewarded with relaxation. In addition, women have many responsibilities. Younger girls are supposed to stay with the *ilmurran/morani* and keep them entertained while women are responsible for building and maintaining *bomas* as well as cooking and child care (Godwin ole Mshumba, pers. comm. 2001).

Now, with many *ilmurran/morani* leaving their homes to get jobs in cities, someone else has to be responsible for their roles. However, if a person takes over the *ilmurran/morani* roles while they are away, then their works are left unattended as well. Therefore, elders often have to graze the herds and take them to water. Similarly, many more children are going to school from the Maasai community, causing an additional portion of the community to be unavailable to fulfill their traditional chores. As a result, in recent years, we have seen women grazing and taking the herds to water. Although *ilmurran/morani* going to cities is a relatively modern occurrence, it is already beginning to transform the social structure and gender roles of the Ngorongoro Maasai.

Results from this study show that there are no differences in responses over space and/or time on the key questions of the research. Moreover, this study indicates that Ngorongoro Maasai are not moving to cities and towns by

choice, but rather, it is out of necessity. Therefore, steps need to be taken by both the NCAA and by non-governmental organizations to address causes of poverty among the Maasai. NCAA should continue to allow the Maasai to practice small-scale agriculture while finding ways to prevent this privilege from being abused. Furthermore, additional Government and NGO programs like the ones of ERETO-Ngorongoro Pastoralist Project would help alleviate the necessity of going to cities. ERETO-Ngorongoro Pastoralist Project does community-based herd restocking and focuses on sustainability through community education and involvement.

Conclusion

Currently, the Ngorongoro Maasai are experiencing a period of transformation in which their subsistence strategies, settlement patterns and social as well as gender roles are being reinvented. Attempts at conservation have forced Ngorongoro Maasai into boundaries of the Ngorongoro Conservation Area (NCA), limiting their movement and thus threatening their pastoral lifestyle. Decrease in size of the herds due to deaths caused by diseases and prolonged droughts has led to a untenable economy and subsistence based on "pure" pastoralism. As such, the Ngorongoro Maasai are supplementing their pastoral diet with agricultural foods. When the NCAA lifted up the ban on agriculture in the NCA in 1992, the Maasai viewed this as a supplementary means to their survival. However, in 2001 NCAA threatened to ban cultivation in the NCA because it was considered incompatible with conservation efforts. This would have serious implications for the economic well being of the Ngorongoro Maasai. As a result, a lot of meetings and consultations between NCAA officials, politicians and Maasai leaders as well as other people were conducted in 2002 in order to resolve this crisis. It was verbally agreed that only the Maasai could cultivate small farms around their *bomas*.

This study shows that large numbers of Maasai are now working in cities and towns as watchmen and security guards in order to support themselves and their families. Although *ilmurran/morani* are easily getting temporary jobs and earning enough money to buy grains,

cattle and other supplies for their families, this is seriously affecting the communities that they leave behind. The social structure and gender roles in the communities are being forced to shift as well as a result of many men from the same age-set being away. Over time, as different people compensate for those who are gone, some new social and gender relations and interactions will emerge. It is now common to find old men and even women in Ngorongoro filling in for the roles and positions of *Ilmurran/morani*. Clearly, the "...identity and ethnicity are being redefined for Maasai and the outcome is uncertain..." (Campbell, 1993: 271).

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Appendix A: Key for history of contact with urban areas

NL= never gone to city or town
 LR= gone to city or town and returned
 FL= close family member is in city
 L= in city now