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Maasai Identity in the 21st Century

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MAASAI IDENTITY IN THE 21ST CENTURY

by

Allison Marie Kotowicz

A Thesis Submitted in

Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Science

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August 2013

ABSTRACT

MAASAI IDENITTY IN THE 21ST CENUTRY

by

Allison Marie Kotowicz

The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, 2013

Under the Supervision of Professor Dr. Cheryl Ajiroutu

The Maasai people of East Africa have managed to retain much of their culture and traditions in the face of colonialism and increasing internal and external pressures. The Maasai have been viewed by many as the iconic, traditional representation of Africa. This representation affects perceptions and ideas about what it means to be Maasai. However, a person or group's identity is not a static, singular phenomenon, but composed of multiple identities and layers which are constantly changing.

In today's world, the Maasai are faced with changes and challenges from processes such as globalization and modernity. As the world becomes more globalized and interconnected, the pastoralist lifestyle is becoming more difficult to maintain. In a culture like the Maasai where the cow and pastoralism plays a central role, what will happen to this culture when pastoralism is no longer a viable way of life? What happens when the continuity of the past lifestyle and culture is uncoupled? In the 21st century changes are occurring that are affecting the Maasai. These changes are multi-tiered occurring locally, nationally and globally. At each level there are stakeholders who participate in informing the scope of change with all of its challenges, consequences and transformation due in part to the influence globalization and modernity.

This research seeks to understand the significance of identity in social change, especially in the face of globalization and modernity. How do these changes and transformations influence what it means to be Maasai from the etic and emic points of view, emphasizing the ways in which the Maasai are active participants in social change and the resulting transformations. This research makes use of three aspects of Maasai identity to illustrate the implications of social change on the: “the culture of the cow”, clothing, and rites of passage. Each of these aforementioned areas reflects the complex and dynamic processes at work when considering what it means to be Maasai in the 21st century. The research also addresses questions of change and its effect on the sectors within the Maasai population. They are faced with negotiating their identity and what it means to be Maasai in the 21st century.

Keywords: Identity, Globalization, Modernity, Representation, Maasai, Tanzania, 21st Century

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract.....	ii
List of Figures.....	vi
Acknowledgements.....	viii
Chapter 1: Introduction.....	1
Chapter 2: Literature Review.....	7
Chapter 3: Methodology.....	32
Chapter 4: “Culture of the Cow”.....	50
Chapter 5: Clothing.....	74
Chapter 6: Rites of Passage.....	102
Chapter 7: Discussion and Conclusion.....	136
References.....	146
Appendix A: Interview Chart.....	154
Appendix B: Verbal Consent Script.....	157
Appendix C: Interview Guide- Youth.....	161
Appendix D: Interview Guide- Elder.....	165

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Maasai Warriors Singing and Dancing at Circumcision Ceremony.....	1
Figure 2: Map of East Africa.....	7
Figure 3: Maasai Women Preparing Jewelry for a Maasai Wedding Ceremony.....	13
Figure 4: Maasai Family outside of their home.....	21
Figure 5: Map of Traditional Maasai Land.....	24
Figure 6: Author visiting with Maasai family.....	32
Figure 7: Entry into the field: I am explaining the research project to Maasai family.....	39
Figure 8: I am helping clean containers used to store cow's milk	41
Figure 9: Conducting interview with Maasai woman.....	45
Figure 10: Maasai youth preparing to give cow injection of medicine.....	50
Figure 11: Maasai boma with cattle kraal and houses.....	52
Figure 12: Maasai women milking cow.....	56
Figure 13: Maasai home built from bricks.....	58
Figure 14: Traditional Maasai home.....	60
Figure 15: Example of Maasai farm growing maize.....	62
Figure 16: Maasai women working on beadwork.....	74
Figure 17: Maasai family at master's graduation ceremony.....	76
Figure 18: Maasai man with face and clothing covered in red ocher.....	79
Figure 19: Maasai warrior.....	80
Figure 20: Maasai women with children preparing animal skin.....	82
Figure 21: Example of Maasai clothing made from animal hide and decorated with beads.....	83
Figure 22: Example of Maasai clothing made from animal hide, covered in red ocher, and decorated with beads.....	84
Figure 23: Maasai warriors dancing.....	86
Figure 24: Maasai warriors with decorations and dressed in contemporary Maasai clothing which is imported.....	88

Figure 25: Group of Maasai children in contemporary cloth dress	91
Figure 26: Group of Maasai children in school uniforms.....	92
Figure 27: Maasai children in cloth dress dyed with red ochre.....	93
Figure 28: Grooming: Maasai women putting on red ochre.....	94
Figure 29: Young Maasai women wearing traditional beading and the contemporary Maasai clothing made from imported cloth.....	99
Figure 30: Maasai women with child dressed in beaded animal skins.....	100
Figure 31: Maasai boys preparing for circumcision ceremony.....	102
Figure 32: Maasai warriors walking around cattle kraal at male circumcision ceremony.....	104
Figure 33: Maasai boys preparing to be circumcised.....	114
Figure 34: Group of Maasai celebrating at male circumcision ceremony.....	131
Figure 35: Young calves.....	136

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Chapter 1



Figure 1: Maasai Warriors Singing and Dancing at Circumcision Ceremony. Source: Allison Kotowicz 2012.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Since the beginning of the discipline, the question of identity has been asked by anthropologists. Issues influencing identity, in all cultures, include political, psychological, and symbolic concerns (Barnard, A., & Spencer, J. (1996); Cohen, A. P. (1985); Lindhom, C. (2001); Tazi (2004). The Maasai people of Eastern Africa have managed to retain much of their culture and traditions in the face of colonialism and increasing internal and external pressures. My thesis looks at the topic of identity within

the 21st century. This thesis fits and into the larger conversation within anthropology on the role of identity on individual and group levels, internal and external factors effecting identity, the effects of modernization, and globalization on identity, and on representations of Africa and the African people.

The Maasai have been viewed by many, both insiders and outsiders, as the iconic, traditional representation of Africa. This representation of the Maasai affects not only external perceptions and ideas about the Maasai but also internal perceptions and ideas about what it means to be Maasai. A person or groups identity is not a static, singular phenomenon, but composed of multiple identities and layers which are constantly changing. For example, I myself have multiple identities: I am a daughter, a sister, an anthropologist, a student, and an American citizen to name a few of my identities. Each of these identities are defined and brought forth in different ways in different contexts. The same applies also for a member of the Maasai community. They can be fathers or mothers, brothers or sisters, students, employees, business men, cattle herders, rural or urban dwellers. Each one of these identities plays into each other and becomes part of the larger picture of what it means to Maasai in the 21st century. When we are looking at an individual's or groups identity we must be aware that identity is not a singular phenomenon, but rather a diverse multitude of identities that are constantly shifting and being redefined by insiders and outsiders to a particular group.

Identity in the 21st century is an important cultural question because of the impact and influence of modernization and globalization. The Maasai people have been able to maintain a strong sense of traditional identity in the face of overwhelming adversity.

They have been able to maintain strong ties to their traditional culture while other groups

have not. This study of identity is important for several reasons. Everyone identifies and defines themselves as well as others around them. People are constantly manipulating and creating categories that define both insiders and outsiders as well as defining the boundaries of identity and maintaining their traditions and cultures. Traditions and culture are not static but dynamic and are maintained by both those who define themselves as a member of a particular group and those who do not. Through this research, I will be able to give an account of social change and transformation from the perspective of the people experiencing and masking these changes. In today's world, the Maasai are faced with changes and challenges from processes such as globalization and modernity. This is important because too often, accounts for social change and transformations are misunderstood or told through the eyes of strangers or people with little knowledge of the culture they are studying. This research seeks to understand these changes and transformations from both the etic and emic points of view, emphasizing the ways in which local people affected by such change are active participants in social change and the resulting transformations. By studying identity, data from this research can be used to identify cultural practices that assist local groups of people and cultures seeking to maintain their heritage while moving forward globally and economically, benefiting not only the local peoples and cultures but the countries in which these people live.

In the 21st century, the Maasai people of East Africa are increasingly facing issues of modernity. As the world becomes more globalized and interconnected, the pastoralist lifestyle is becoming more difficult to maintain. In a culture like the Maasai where the cow and pastoralism plays a central role in what will happen to this culture when

pastoralism is no longer a viable way of life? What happens when the continuity of the past in lifestyle and culture is broken? Changes are occurring both internally and externally. In the 21st century we are beginning to see the changes, challenges, and the consequences of globalization and modernity more clearly. Shifts and changes are unfolding that are influencing what it means to be Maasai. My thesis will address questions of change and it is affecting the Maasai, focusing particularly on the Maasai youth population. It is the youth who are faced with negotiating their identity and what it means to be Maasai in the 21st century. Maasai youth are making decisions consciously and unconsciously that are shaped by internal and external factors. I will also examine the significance of identity in social change, especially in the face of globalization and modernity. In order to illustrate the above process of social change, identity formation and maintenance I will examine three aspects of Maasai identity: “the culture of the cow”, clothing, and rites of passage. Each of these areas reflects the complex and dynamic processes at work when one considers what it means to be Maasai in the 21st century.

An individual or groups identity is negotiated and contested on a number of different levels, including the local level, the national level, and the international level. Each of the players on the different levels have particular vested interested in certain definitions identity and representations of identity. In the 21st century, we see Maasai identity being negotiated on local, national, and international levels. As I will illustrate throughout this thesis, an individual and a group does not have just one singular identity but rather a multitude of different identities which are constantly at play with each and are being redefined and renegotiated. When we begin to look at the different

stakeholders and vested interests in maintain a particular identity or representation we also see that these perspectives exist on a continuum with multiple perspectives.

Throughout this thesis I will illustrate the different perspectives and levels on which change and debate are occurring on Maasai identity through specific examples in each of the data chapters.

In the first section of the paper I will first go through the relevant literature. In this chapter I will discuss and review the different conceptions of identity in anthropology looking at symbolic (representation), psychological (belief), and political (behavior) perspectives on identity. I will then review several ethnographies that examine identity, pastoralists, and the Maasai. I proceed with a brief discussion of key concepts such as representation that reader should understand and be familiar with in order to understand the concept of identity in Africa and among the Maasai. I conclude this chapter with a brief description of the Maasai people. I also introduce the reader to particular focus areas and crosscutting themes such as education, religion, gender, the “culture of the cow”, rites of passage, and clothing. In the next chapter I discuss my methodology going through the different stages of my fieldwork and research process. These two chapters provide the reader with the necessary context, background and methodological information in order to be able to read and understand the following data chapters.

The second section of the paper contains the three data chapters. The three data chapters are the “culture of the cow”, clothing, and rites of passage. In each chapter I discuss the past and present situation the Maasai are currently in outlining changes and challenges to Maasai identity. In the “culture of the cow” chapter I review Maasai

identity through a psychological perspective focusing on their belief in a pastoralist lifestyle and the importance of cattle to the Maasai identity. In the chapter on clothing I review the symbolic aspects of Maasai identity as it I negotiated and renegotiated through clothing choice of the Maasai people. In the rites of passage chapter I review the political or behavioral concept of identity as it pertains to the circumcision ritual which marks the passage from childhood to adulthood for young Maasai men and women. Throughout these chapters I also remind the reader of the overarching themes of gender, the effects of education, and the effects of globalization which cross-cut all of the data chapters.

In the final section of the paper I review the key findings from the data chapters and their implication for the future of Maasai identity in the 21st century. I also discuss the role of the anthropologists in current and future research. I conclude the thesis with discussing the possibilities for future research and give a brief description of the work I plan to continue for my doctoral dissertation.

Chapter 2

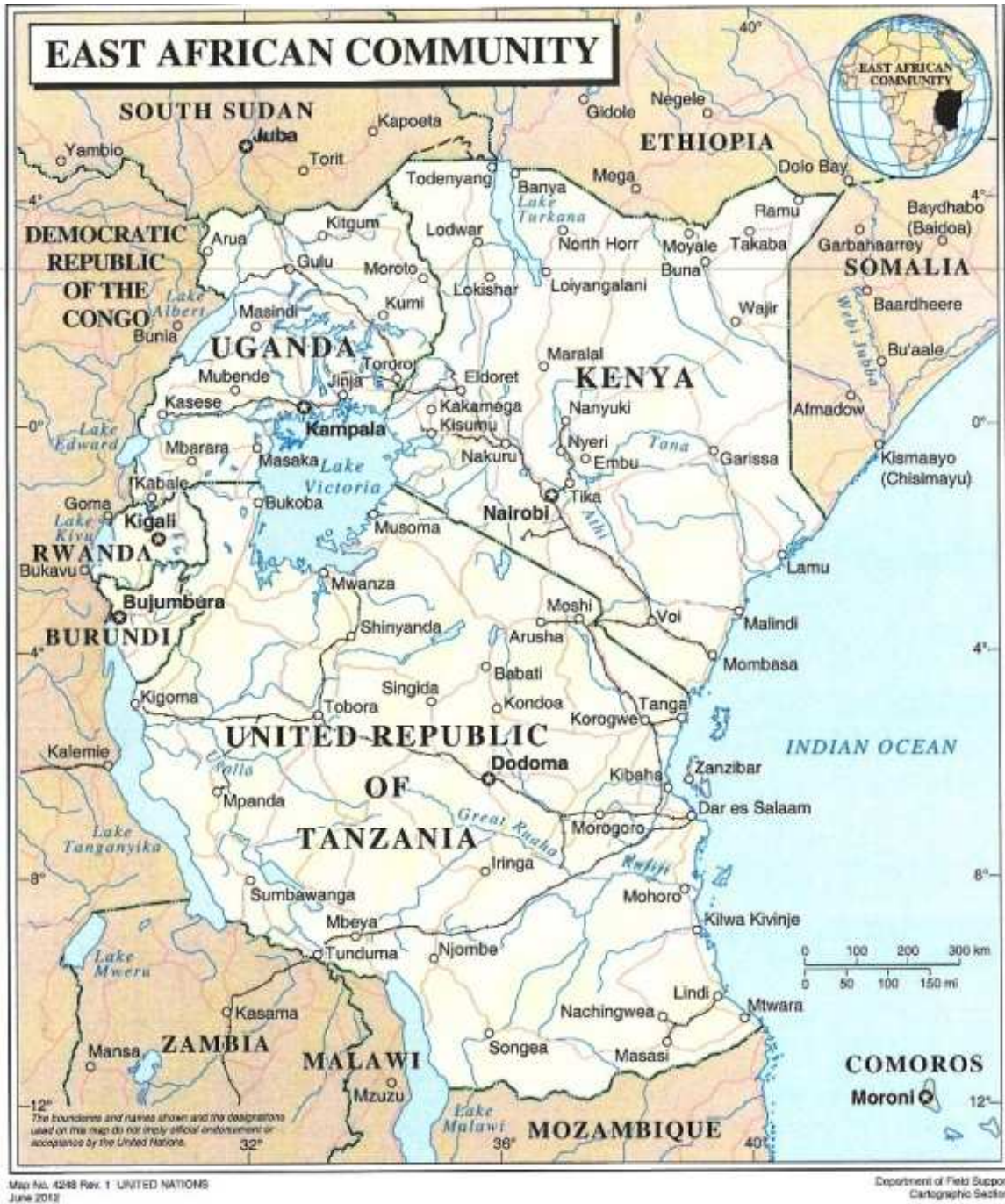


Figure 2: Map of East Africa Source:
<http://www.un.org/depts/Cartographic/map/profile/estafr.pdf>

Literature Review

In order to understand identity within the Maasai, we must first understand the concept of identity within anthropology. In the literature review, I will limit my review of the literature to a discussion of the following three perspectives of identity within anthropology: symbolic (representation), psychological (belief), and political (behavior). I also include literature examining the effects of modernization and globalization are also important to as well as some of the critical ethnographies that have studied identity and pastoralists.

When examining identity among the Maasai and other cultural groups in Africa, one must understand the issue of representation as it pertains to the African continent and the Maasai people. In order to understand the concept of identity on the African continent and within the Maasai, I included a review of key terms and concepts. They are cross cutting themes such as representation, Africa as a social construction, Africa as a place, ecological and environmentalist perspective of Africa, Africa as a self-determining continent in the context of nationalism, and representation among the Maasai. Without a proper understanding of these concepts and concerns, the full picture of identity within the Maasai cannot be fully understood or comprehended. I conclude this chapter with a brief description of the Maasai.

Identity within Anthropology

The concept of identity, within anthropology and the social sciences in general, is a nebulous concept with multiple meanings. The term identity is related to the term culture, in the sense that culture influences identity. Identity within the discipline of anthropology has been viewed through a number of different lenses and perspectives.

For the purposes of this paper I will focus on symbolic (representation), psychological (belief), and political (behavior).

One perspective that identity has been viewed through is symbolic. When looking at anthropology from a symbolic perspective, issues of importance include representation which is reflected in education, religion, rituals and ceremonies, clothing, language, and subsistence patterns (Cohen: 1985, 2000; Jacobson-Widding: 1983). In the Maasai, this perspective is articulated through the type and use of clothing that is worn. A second way that anthropologists examine identity is through the psychological perspective (Erikson: 1968; Jacobson-Widding: 1983; Lindholm: 2001). From this perspective, it is important to identify and discern the relationship between individual identities on the one hand and group identity on the other. It is also important to discern what an individual and a group believes and how this is reflected throughout one's lifetime. This perspective is articulated throughout the Maasai lifestyle and subsistence pattern of pastoralism and the "culture of the cow". A third perspective is political. This perspective is concerned with issues such as ethnic or tribal identity versus a state or national identity (Broch-Due: 2005; Hutchinson & Smith: 1996; Maybury-Lewis: 2002; Mach: 1993). This perspective is also includes behaviors, such as rituals and ceremonies within the Maasai. Behaviors help inform group membership and who is not a part of a particular group. As I conclude the write-up of this study I will include discussion if the implications of modernization and globalization as discussed by Friedman: 1994.

General Overview (Major theories and theorists of identity within anthropology):

Psychoanalytic theorist Erik H. Erikson's *Identity and the Life Cycle. Selected Papers* (1959) brought the term identity into general use (A Barnard, J Spencer - 1996). Erikson proposed that one's personal identity was located within the unconscious. It was both the location of a durable and persistent sense of sameness within the individual (A Barnard, J Spencer - 1996). "Individuals conceive of the self in terms of the *cognitive models or paradigm types of personality or moral character available in their historical time and within spatial range of their experience" (A Barnard, J Spencer - 1996). Within anthropology, the concept of identity places emphasis on the individual's cultural and social surroundings and the mechanisms of socialization as the processes whereby individuals acquire culture (A Barnard, J Spencer - 1996). Key anthropologists within this tradition in anthropology include Margaret Mead (1930), Ruth Benedict (1934), and the culture and personality school (1930s). Other important theorists that have influenced this field within anthropology are Georg Simmel (1897, 1908, 1910), Emile Durkheim (1933, 1938), George Herbert Mead (1934), and Alfred Schutz (1932, 1973). In addition to these authors, several books inform the concept of identity within anthropology from a psychological perspective. Jacobson-Widding (1983) presents a broad overview of identity from several authors from different fields within the social sciences. This contribution was updated with the work of Charles Lindholm (2001) who provides an essential overview of the major theories within the psychological tradition of anthropology and identity.

Towards the end of the 20th century anthropologist engaged in research that investigated the global implications of ethnicity and globalization from a political perspective on the study of identity. Jonathan Friedman (1994) and an edited volume by

John R. Campbell and Alan Rew (1999) provides a different conceptual framework to view identity, mainly through the contexts of global processes and globalization.

Another area of study within anthropology that has proved fruitful is through the study of ethnicity, particularly by John Hutchinson and Anthony D. Smith (1996) and David Maybury-Lewis (2002). From a political anthropological perspective, Zdzislaw Mach (1993) and Vigdis Broch-Due (2005) provides different viewpoints of the tradition of identity including the relationship between ethnic or tribal identities and national identities and the study of conflict and violence in the role of identity formation.

Within the symbolic tradition of anthropology, Anthony P. Cohen (1985, 2000) provides framework to focus on symbolism and the role it plays in the creation of identity and boundaries between groups through the construction and maintenance of boundaries and the construction of community. The symbolic tradition examines the multiple meanings of symbols. James Ferguson's (1990, 2006) work in Lesotho on the role of cattle in economic life and social life as well as his work on Africa, globalization, and modernity has provided numerous insights. Other scholars who have been useful in understanding the theoretical foundations of this study include Anthony Giddens's *The Constitution of Society* (1984) which examines the construction of society through the theory of structuration. Jean-Loup Amselle's book *Mestizo Logic: Anthropology of Identity in Africa and Elsewhere* (1998) emphasizes the fluidity and flexibility of identity through time and space (Amselle 1998: xi).

Ethnographies on identity

Several ethnographies that include identity throughout Africa, especially Eastern Africa and Tanzania, inform our understanding of the pastoralist lifestyle of the region. These ethnographies include Elliot Fratkin's (1998) work among the Ariaal Pastoralists of Kenya, Mario I. Aguilar's (1998) work among the Oromo pastoralists of Ethiopia, and J. Terrence McCabe's (2004) work with the Turkana of Kenya, and Paul Spencer's (2004) and Jon Holtzman's (2009) work among the Samburu of Kenya. Broader overviews of the pastoralist tradition and lifestyle include John G. Galaty and Pierre Bonte's (1991) work on pastoralism in Africa, David M. Anderson and Vigdis Broch-Due's (1999) work on poverty and pastoralism, Andrew Smith's (2005) book about the emergence of the pastoralist traditions, and Maghan Keita's (2002) edited volume on the construction of African historical identity.

Social change over time and space serve as the stimulus for re-studies of canons in the discipline. An example of this area of inquiry is demonstrated by the work on the Nuer. E.E. Evans-Pritchard's (1940), Sharon E. Hutchinson's (1996), and Jon D. Holtzman's (2000) work among the Nuer of the Sudan provide scholars with a chronology of ethnographies examining and documenting social change among the Nuer. Evans-Pritchard's classic ethnography on the Nuer in the 1940s looking at the Nuer's social structure and pastoralist lifestyle, to Hutchinson's work with the Nuer in the 20th century looking at the impact of money, war, and the state on Nuer populations, to finally Holtzman's work in 2000 among the Nuer refugees in Minnesota. The capacity to understand across time and space the formation, transformation and reformation of identity is a growing area of inquiry.

Identity among the Maasai



Figure 3: Maasai Women Preparing Jewelry for a Maasai Wedding Ceremony. Source: Allison Kotowicz, 2012

A.C. Hollis's book (1905), one of the first to be published about the Maasai, provides invaluable overview and insight into many aspects of Maasai life, including language, rituals, traditions, and mythology. Dorothy L. Hodgson's (1999, 2000, and 2001) numerous works with the Maasai in Northern Tanzania provides an introduction to the Maasai people and their culture. Her works with the Maasai ranging from historical articles, religion, gender dynamics, and development have provided valuable insights into the Maasai worldview. Peter Rigby (1985, 1992) and Paul Spencer (2003, 2004) have written several books about the Maasai dealing with issues of power and the age-set system. The most helpful book on the Maasai, in terms of their identity and culture, has

been *Being Maasai*, edited by Thomas Spear and Richard Waller (1993). This book shows the complex nature of Maasai tradition and culture, what it means to be Maasai, and how “being Maasai” is dynamic and always changing.

There have been a few Maasai authors and scholars who have written about their own culture and experiences of being Maasai. Naomi Kipury’s (1983) book on the oral literature of the Maasai and Tepilit Ole Saitoti’s (1986) autobiography provides a voice for the Maasai from within the culture, of individuals who have lived and experienced change over time. These books offer an insider perspective that is missing from other scholarly and academic works.

Representation

Africa as a Social Construction

Africa as most of us know it today is a social construction, an artificial entity that has been created, recreated, and maintained over hundreds of years. First, constructed by explorers journals, missionaries narratives/accountings, and anthropologists who have documented and studied the people and cultures of Africa during the pre-colonial, colonial, and postcolonial periods. This representation of Africa has led to a number of stereotypes about the continent and its peoples including but not limited to savage, exotic, corrupt, poverty, rural, tribal, the Dark Continent, undeveloped, and pristine natural environments. This representation of Africa is created and maintained through a number of different channels including popular media, traveler’s accounts, and tourism (Keim: 1999; Mayer: 2002). The social construction of Africa informs national, ethnic, and individual identity through time and space. These representations that have been

constructed are seen as individuals and groups create, negotiate, and renegotiate what it means to Maasai.

The social construction of Africa started in the pre-colonial period with tales from explorers and adventurers who went to Africa in search of new discoveries and adventures. These explorers kept journals and documentation which were then retold to western society upon their return from Africa. Before formal settlement of the African continent, Europeans and other foreigners from Asia and Arabia were interested in Africa's vast resources and people. One of the largest ventures that occurred on the continent was the slave trade. In western Africa, the slave trade was part of the Atlantic slave trade moving slaves from Africa, to Europe, and then to the Americas. In East Africa, the slave trade provided slaves to the Arabian Peninsula, India, and other parts of Asia. In addition to the slave trade, the East African coast was a hub for national and international trade with the inland and with the Middle East, India, and other parts of Asia. As time progressed, Europeans became more interested in the African continent and what it could do for them in terms of colonial conquest and development of their own nation and peoples. During the late 1800s into the 1900s we see the rise of a number of developments that helped to push European colonial conquest and a new set of players on the African continent which included scientists, missionaries, colonists, and anthropologists. The first development was the portioning and carving up of Africa which occurred at the Berlin Conference 1884-1885. During this conference, the European powers divided Africa, along arbitrary lines, its land and its resources, and decided who got what and how much each country would receive. After the Berlin

Conference we see the intensification of colonialism and the creation of nation-states on the continent which had not been their previously. (Keim 1999; Mayer 2002).

The prevalence of scientific explanations also informed the social construction of the Africa. The creation of the representation of African included the developments of evolutionism and natural selection. These theories posited that the different races and cultures of the world were on a linear continuum which went from savagery, to barbarism, and finally to civilization. According to this theory, western European societies were at the top of the cultural and social ladder and considered to be civilized while other peoples and races such as Africans were still in the stage of savagery or barbarism. This meant that Africans were placed as “primitive others” or as children in contrast to the civilized Europeans. Africans were demeaned to be subhuman. It was the job of the missionaries and the colonists to help Africans, to bring them to civilization and improve their way of life, but not so much as they would be considered the same as other Europeans.

In Tanzania, which was first a German colony (1880s-1919), however after World War I became a British settler colony (1919-1961), the British established a policy of indirect rule, where Africans would rule each other on the basis of the creation of fictive tribes and traditions. Previous relationships between African peoples which were grounded on a different basis, now became more rigidly defined and separated based on the need to create an effect system of domination and rule over the people. This process was accelerated through the settlement population of settlers, colonial administrators, missionaries, and anthropologists who were able to live long term in the region (Keim 1999; Mayer: 2002).

Place

Africa, as a culture area of study, as often been defined and represented through the stereotype of the “Dark Continent”. When we look or hear about Africa all we seem to hear about are primitive savages, constant tribal warfare, poverty, and corruption (Keim: 27). The place that is depicted is a place where there is no light, no hope and that is so foreign we can hardly see ourselves relating to those people halfway across the global. The African people are stuck in the same old stone age patterns as our ancestors and have not had the ability to move beyond this into what we would call civilization (Keim 27; 32-35; 40-45). The African world that foreigners see and experience is exotic and primarily rural in nature; rarely do we envision Africans as living or working in urban environments such as our own big cities. Africa from this perspective is a static representation of man living at one with nature, earning his living from the land living in a constant state of desperation and fear due to poverty, natural disasters, and wild animals. This is the land that that many can only conceive of in their dreams. Tourists go to Africa in search of this wild and exotic adventure, a taste of life outside the beaten path but not too far off the path or to stray too far in the wilderness. The tourist experience must be contained so that the individual gets a small taste of Africa, just enough for bragging rights when they return home to their friends and family. Tourists rarely exit outside of this bubble that is created for them in which they can safely interact and see as much as they want and then return to the safety of their tented camps or luxury hotels. (Keim: 111-143) This historical representation of Africa is recreated in current representations of the continent and its people, both by insiders and outsiders, and is internalized and reinterpreted. This representation is seen in the expectations of tourists

and foreigners who come to Africa wanting to see the Maasai and also by the stance that other Tanzanians and governmental officials portray and see the Maasai.

Ecological/Environmentalist

For many Westerner's Africa and its people are considered the "other", the exact opposite of ourselves. This representation of Africa as the "other" is used to help define and lift-up Western society and lifestyles to the detriment of Africa societies and cultures. This representation is used to validate our existence and our accomplishments in contrast to African interests and accomplishments. Even though the Africans are supposedly not like us, many people feel a pull to help or save African animals, wildlife, and lifestyles. Globally based environmental concerned NGOs have a growing influence in our representation of Africa. There is a model of development and conservation placed on the African continent that is an effort to save what we believe is the "real" Africa but is in fact a representation that stretches back hundreds of years. In ads on television and in other popular media we will often see pictures of starving, dying women and children or animals in a pristine environment with the plea to please call and pledge just a few dollars to save these poor creatures. (Keim: 71-87) For the Maasai, this perspective is important in that the Maasai have always lived in the bush, often in wildlife rich areas. This perspective is reflected in the indigenous rights movement that the Maasai are now a part of international and national policies that are created in order to protect the represented image of wild Africa.

Self-Determinism

After colonialism, when the dust finally settled and the African nations were now independent, they were left with questions on how to move on after hundreds of year's European contact and a long period of colonial rule. Many African states inherited a somewhat broken-down model of western rule, particular democracy, but with no idea how to actually create and maintain a working governmental system as in the colonial rule they were not allowed to participate in these efforts (Khapoya: 183-191). Other African states, like Tanzania, decided to go a different route than democracy to the Soviet and Chinese inspired socialist policies and forms of government. Either way, most Africa states were left with few resources and little knowledge which has led to several problems including but not limited to government corruption and general mismanagement of the state (Birmingham: 1-9). Within the newly independent African nation-states, there has been and continues to be internal group tension on the issues of identity, nationalism, and tribalism. Many African states, due to the Berlin Conference, were left with carved out countries that held hundreds of different ethnic groups or tribes. After independence, many of these tribes and ethnic groups were at odds with each, favoring a more local group identity rather than a larger national group identity (Khapoya: 208-212). Some nation-states, such as Tanzania, were successful in creating a strong sense of nationalism while still maintaining strong ties to local ethnic group identities without much conflict between the two, through a socialist policy called Ujamaa. The policy was instituted by Tanzania's first president, Julius Nyerere also known as Mwalimu or teacher to the Tanzanian people. Ujamaa, meaning family hood in Swahili, came to represent Nyerere's attempts at creating an extended family which would harken back to the days of pre-colonialism, which as Nyerere said would serve as

“the basis of African socialism” (Khapoya: 197-201). There is also a tension of representation that is seen in policies of development and tourism. Tourism is a major source of income for many African states, Tanzania included. But the tourist’s visions and expectation of an African adventure and world are often different than that of African people and their government. Many governments are encouraging and pushing their citizens to adopt more modern, urban lifestyles to portray a positive national image to themselves and the world. Tourists and certain international organizations, however, are not necessarily invested in the same vision or view of Africa as its leaders and people. The tourists and developers want to preserve what they consider to be the “real” Africa, the representation of Africa that was created hundreds of years ago (Keim: 58-61). This is a contentious issue that juxtaposes the local practices of people with the expected representation when local disasters occur involving the local wildlife. An example could be the response of angry farmers to an elephant that has ruined crops.



Figure 3: Maasai Family outside of their home. Source: Allison Kotowicz, 2012

Representation of the Maasai

Throughout their history, the Maasai have been lifted up and held back by colonial authorities and the Tanzanian State. Prior to the seventeenth century, the Maasai were agro-pastoralists who raise sorghum and millet in addition to cattle and other small livestock (Spear: 1). As time went on the Maasai became more specialized in pastoralism on the plains of Kenya and Tanzania. Throughout their history, the Maasai have been only one part of a complex economic and ethnic framework consisting of Bantu farmers and various hunter-gatherers. Each group relied on the other to provide certain goods that could not be provided within their own system of production. For example the Maasai would rely on the farmers to provide grain to supplement their milk production in

the dry season and get honey from hunter-gatherers which were important in various rituals for the production of honey-beer.

“Our view of the Maasai has thus moved far beyond a simple opposition between pure pastoralists and others to embrace a view in which Maasai society is seen as encompassing a triangle of economic forces-pastoralism, hunting-gathering, and agriculture- within complex cultural structure which were both highly differentiated and complementary” (Spear: 9).

During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, we begin to see a “pastoral revolution” as the Maasai “slowly adopted iron weapons, hunted Zebu or Sanga cattle became better adapted to semi-arid environments, and politico-religious functionaries able to serve as foci for group solidarity and identity (Spear: 10). This “pastoral revolution” saw increased specialization in pastoralism and the evolution of a purely pastoralist lifestyle as the ideal lifestyle for the Maasai. Cattle were now the most valuable trade commodity and the Maasai began to view agriculturalists and hunter-gatherers as pursuing inferior lifestyles without cattle. Despite this growing distaste for agriculture or hunting and gathering the Maasai still depended on the resources of these other groups.

“The symbolic oppositions inherent in establishing Maasai cultural hegemony represented more than a simple means of identifying and reinforcing pastoral values; they also represented a way of controlling who had access to limited pastoral resources and the ability to manage them. At the same time, however, pastoral survival depended on access to resources outside pastoral society, and so it was necessary to extend pastoral institutions beyond the bounds of pastoralism and to grant access to them to others” (Spear: 13).

By the end of the nineteenth century, the Maasai experienced a series of devastating droughts, famines, and diseases. Due to this many Maasai were forced to adopt other measures such as agriculture or hunting and gathering in order to survive.

At this time we also see the arrival of European colonists, first the Germans and then the English. During the colonial period, the British saw the Maasai as “noble savages”, fierce warriors whom they could respect and share common beliefs compared to other tribes in Tanzania. As a result of this, the Maasai were left alone on land set aside for them, which included at one point in time the Serengeti National Park and the Ngorongoro Conservation Area. However, this view changed rapidly with the implementation of indirect rule by the British and later developmental initiatives through the Tanzanian state. By this time, the traditional or ideal mindset of a purely pastoralist lifestyle for the Maasai had become what appear to be a fixed point. “In spite of these complex realities, ‘Maasai’ and ‘pastoralism’ have become so closely linked in the historical and ethnographic literature, not to mention in the thought of Maasai pastoralists themselves, that the Maasai are commonly viewed as the prototypical pastoralists, secure in their own exclusive ethnicity” (Spear: 2). The Maasai relied primarily on their cattle for everything from food to clothing to medicine as a medium of exchange. (Spear: 1-16)

Also as a result of colonial policies and Tanzanian national policies the Maasai were left out of many developmental opportunities and initiatives such as education and healthcare. Development and modernization among the Maasai focused on how to better improve the husbandry of livestock for profit. As time has passed the Maasai and their culture have become a popular image of representation of what is considered to be traditional Africa. Many trips to Tanzania and Kenya, along with the safari and animal attractions, also promise a view of the Maasai, the tribe who still lives a traditional lifestyle in the bush among the wild animals relying only on their cattle. These tourists are brought to places like “tourist bomas” to visit the last of vanishing tribes in Tanzania

Figure 5: Map of Traditional Maasai Land Source
<http://www.preciouslifeinternational.org/maasai.php>

Classified as a member of the Nilo-Hamitic ethnic group, the Maasai are a nomadic, pastoral people living in southern Kenya and northern Tanzania, part of the East African Plateau, and Great Rift Valley. It is commonly believed that the Maasai migrated from areas northwest of Lake Rudolf or Lake Turkana as early as 1500 years ago. As they continued southward, the Maasai raided, conquered, and assimilated other tribes into their midst. The Maasai have a reputation for being one of the most traditional and conservative groups in Africa and have managed to retain much of their traditional culture. The language of the Maasai, Maa, is an oral language. The Maasai have come in contact with a variety of different linguistic and cultural groups, among which include the Cushitic-speaking pastoralists, the Nilotic-speaking semi-pastoralists, and the Bantu-speaking agriculturists (Kipury: 2). In some areas, the Maasai only speak Maa and do not speak either of Tanzania's national languages, English or Swahili.

The social structure of the Maasai culture is deeply rooted. The Maasai people are divided according to age-sets, an organizing principal that permeates every aspect of Maasai life. Differences in age-sets are reflected in the traditional clothing of the Maasai and the domestic duties assigned to each age group. The age system unites all Maasai regardless of national borders or other barriers. It provides the Maasai with a way to organize time and history among their people. "The traditional Maasai system of government is decentralized; with every age-set of every section having its own elected political as well as ritual leaders" (Kipury: 6). The Maasai villages are essentially politically and geographically independent units linked by a culture and shared social structure. The Maasai are divided into two moieties, which are further divided into seven

clans, and then each clan is further divided into sub-clans. Descent is patrilineal. Scholars distinguish between what is called the Maasai proper and Iloikop. In general, the Iloikop are distinguished from the rest of the Maasai because they practice some degree of agriculture versus a purely pastoral lifestyle. In Tanzania, there are three recognized sub-sections of the Maasai: the WaArusha, the Parakuyo, and the Kisongo.

In the data analysis section there are three chapters. The first chapter, “culture of the cow”, frames the two subsequent chapters, which focus on clothing and the rites of passage. In each chapter I have identified three cross-cutting/overarching themes: education, religion, and gender. . The following provides a brief overview of each of key terms and topics important to this study.

Education

Education among the Maasai used to be gender specific and was solely conducted by family members. Boys and girls would follow the behavior of their mothers and fathers. As the children aged, they received more knowledge and responsibilities. During the colonial period, western education was introduced to the African continent. Many missionaries and religious organizations decided to set up schools for the indigenous people. Often, children were forced to attend school against their wishes and the wishes of their parents. Parents need their children to help with work and feared the children would lose their traditional culture. Education also brought opportunities to individuals and peoples. Today, many Maasai attend not only primary school, but also secondary school and university. Western education opens up new doors for individuals

that may be contradictory to the education they received at home. (Hodgson 2004: 126-134; 183-184) (Ole Saitoti)

Religion

The Maasai believe in one God, which they call Engai. Similarities have been drawn between Christianity and the traditional religion of the Maasai on the basis of monotheism and the role of pastoralism as portrayed in the Bible. One of the more contentious points among the traditional Maasai religion and Christianity is the conflict presented by the polygamous relationships that are practiced by a significant portion the population. (Hodgson 2005)

Gender

The Maasai are classified as patriarchal society. Men are typically the owners of the livestock and cattle. When a woman marries she leaves the home of her father and enters into the home of her husband where she will now be identified with her husband's age-set. Much of Maasai society and culture is defined along gender lines. From a young age, boys and girls are assigned specific duties and chores based on their particular gender. Young boys will work with their older boys and fathers where they learn how to care for and herd cattle and other livestock while young girls will help out at the home, taking care of small children and learning from their female relatives. In general, women do not do men's work at all unless there is no male around and men will only do women's work if there are no women around. Today, there appears to be more acceptance of sharing work and helping each other, for example men helping to haul water for the women or going to town to get maize. Men and women typically eat at

different times and in different locations, not with each other. There is not much mixing of the sexes for socialization; women are often gathered with the children around the home doing housework or beadwork while the men will be herding, in the village, or resting in another location. (Hodgson 1999, 2000, 2004)

“Culture of the cow”

The Maasai culture revolves around “the culture of the cow.” Cows for the Maasai symbolize many things, including an ideal subsistence lifestyle of nomadic pastoralism, food, clothing, wealth, and relationships between individuals and families. Cows are so important to the Maasai that people compose songs, name the cattle, and decorate their cattle. Cattle are also used to define relationships both within the Maasai and the perception of the Maasai by other ethnic groups in the area. In their origin myth, the Maasai believe that Engai, or God, gave the Maasai all of the cattle in the world; it was their responsibility to look after. The Maasai traditionally subsist solely on their cattle, goats, and other livestock for everything from food to clothing. Traditionally, the Maasai diet consisted of meat, milk, and blood, but this has changed due to increases in the human population and decreases in livestock population. The Maasai will only kill wild animals to protect people or cattle. They do not eat what they kill. Morani, or Maasai warriors, are the primary hunters and protectors of the clan. Lion hunting is used by the Morani to gain prestige and a reputation of fearlessness. The Maasai live in huts plastered with cow dung and clay; they are arranged in circle, typically around a cattle kraal. Both the village and the cattle kraal are surrounded by large thorny fences. The Maasai homestead is known as an enkag. The size of the enkag varies depending on the

number of families living in them. The Maasai practice polygamy; a man may take as many wives he can afford.

Maasai traditional clothing and dress

Symbolism of clothing

The clothing of the Maasai reflects differences in a person's status. The traditional clothing is a visual reflection of the age-set system. For each phase of a Maasai man or woman's life, there is a prescribed type of traditional clothing. What the Maasai consider traditional clothing has changed over time. In the past, clothing was made from the hides of livestock. Nowadays, most Maasai wear shukas, or sheets, which are usually red or blue in color.

Male and female difference

Differences in clothing and dress for men and women are reflected in the color of clothing they wear and the type of body ornaments or jewelry that one wears.

Rites of passage involving puberty rites

Rites of passage are important in any culture; they allow individuals to move successfully from one phase of life to another and define insiders and outsiders. Rites of passage also mark the status of individuals and their place within their cultural worldview. The Maasai people are divided according to age-sets, an organizing principal that permeates every aspect of Maasai life. Differences in age-sets are reflected in the traditional clothing of the Maasai and the duties assigned to each age group. Both males and females are circumcised. Circumcision is a rite of passage and marks the transition

from childhood into adulthood. The age-set system unites all Maasai regardless of national borders or other barriers. It provides the Maasai with a way to organize time and history among their people. Each age-set has its own name that is associated with particular historical events. Time is reckoned by age-sets not in years. “It provides both men and women with a culturally defined sense of time, structuring the life-course within an endless stream of ageing age-sets that link with oral traditions of the past” (Spencer: 37). Within the age-set systems, there are particular festivals and rituals associated with different phases of the life cycle. The rituals and festivals associated with the age-set system mark transitional periods and change. They unite whole communities and generate a wide sense of Maasai identity and unity. After a woman is married, she joins the age-set of her husband. “Women are not grouped into corporate age-sets like the men. They, however, tend to be identified, in status, with the male age-set with which they danced as young unmarried girls” (Kipury: 8). Important steps in the Maasai age-sets include junior and senior warriors and junior and senior elders. The job of the warriors is to protect the camp and its residents as well as to go on cattle raids.

This research seeks to understand and examine Maasai identity in the 21st century as it is negotiated by the Maasai themselves as individuals, as a group, and how outsiders perceive the Maasai. In order to do this the research will focus on three important areas of contention for Maasai identity in the 21st century. The first section will look at the past and present subsistence pattern of pastoralism practice by the Maasai and the “culture of the cow”. I will look at eth changes and challenges that the Maasai face as they renegotiate what it means to be pastoralists in the 21st century. The second section of the paper will look at the symbolic aspect of Maasai clothing, specifically how clothing is

used as a fluid symbol of identity that is constantly shifting and being renegotiated by insiders and outsiders. The final data chapter will look at rites of passage among the Maasai, in particular the rite of circumcision for young boys and girls, and how the life stages of the Maasai and the rituals are changing over time.

Chapter 3

Methodology



Figure 4: Author visiting with Maasai family. Source: Allison Kotowicz, 2012.

Pre-Fieldwork

The start of this research project began in 2007, at that time, as an undergraduate at Beloit College I participated in the study abroad in Tanzania. This program was run by the Associated Colleges of the Midwest Tanzania: Human Evolution and Ecology program. During my residency, I spent time at the University of Dar es Salaam, and in northern Tanzania where I lived with host families. As a student, I took classes and conducted an independent research projects. My research project examined Maasai Traditional Clothing in the Ngorongoro Conservation Area in the village of Endulen. This was my first introduction to fieldwork with the Maasai people in Tanzania.

As graduate student, I decided that I wanted to conduct my master's thesis research among the Maasai of Tanzania. However additional skills were needed, I needed to gain greater language proficiency in Kiswahili. To accomplish this, I spent a summer (May 2010-August 2010) studying Kiswahili in Morogoro, Tanzania at the ELCT Language and Orientation Program. While at the program, I was introduced to and gained the friendship of a young Maasai man from a local village not far from Morogoro. I explained to him that I wanted to research the Maasai and that I was looking for someone to teach me Maa the Maasai language. He introduced me to his older brother, whom I met with and discussed my interests in working with the Maasai. He expressed interest and willingness to work on the project with me. During this summer of language study, I had solidified the topic of my master's thesis to that of Maasai Identity and decided to work with the Maasai of Morogoro, who had not been studied as extensively as the northern Maasai groups.

Research requires oversight to insure that ethical as well as procedural practices are followed. I needed to acquire permission for my research in two venues. At UWM, once I had developed my research proposal I submitted for permission to conduct research from the Institutional Review Board of the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee (approved IRB# 12.066). In Tanzania, there was a two-step process first with the Tanzania Commission for Science and Technology (COSTECH) and before I could begin to data collection I had to notify the necessary authorities within the district and the village as to my presence and purpose with my research. After months of waiting, I finally received the necessary approvals and clearances to move forward with my research project. I prepared to enter the field in October 2011 and remained in the field

until June 2012. I was instructed that upon my arrival I would need to receive a final research approval and clearance documents from COSTECH, and get a residence permit.

Preparing to go into the field was a process which took several months and was negotiated between myself and my host family. Once in Tanzania, I spent the first month in Dar es Salaam filling out getting approvals needed to conduct research and procuring supplies. Once these tasks were completed I headed to Morogoro, which is the major city near the village. , and stayed in a hotel waiting to meet with my research assistant and driver. During our first meeting, I told my research assistant some of the expectations that I had entering the field, with the first being that I would be buying the food and supply for myself as well my employees. I purchased a tent expecting it to be my home during the fieldwork. As a gesture of appreciation and to support my work, I was going to fix the solar power in the home of my host family. This would allow me to charge my computer occasionally so I could store my data. My main concern was to not impose or burden my host family yet the very fact that I was conducting research in their home was a change and an imposition in itself for them. I had planned a tentative work schedule for a work week of Monday through Friday spending time with the families that I would be working with, doing participant observation activities, and conducting interviews.

Once I arrived at my host family's home, most of my plans were renegotiated. I had envisioned myself living in a tent in the home of the family where I would be staying and working. I had planned on being relatively independent, providing for myself so as not to be a burden on anyone. I would buy and cook my own food, wash my own clothes, and filter my own water. After talking with my research assistant I discovered

that my plans would not work and were unacceptable to my host family. As a guest and a woman, I was expected to stay in the household, not in a tent outside. Living in my tent was not acceptable to my host mother, who was also my research assistant's mother. I was told that I would be staying in the house, sharing a room with one of the other young women in the boma, and the tent would be used as a sleeping place for my research assistant, driver, and any of the other young men who needed a place to sleep at night. Instead of cooking for me, my host mother and the other young women of the house would cook for me and my research assistant. As far as meal preparation, I would buy the necessary food and supplies and one of the mamas or young women would cook the food. After I had fed myself and my employees, including the head of the family, any leftover food would be dispersed between the women and children of the house. I always purchased extra fruits and vegetables for the entire family. In return I would buy all of the necessary cooking supplies and pay my host mother a small stipend for all of the extra work that she and the family was doing. I would help in the preparation of meals, but for the most part I was inexperienced and more of a burden than a help in the kitchen. When I would try to wash my clothes on my own, the older women would always ask if I wanted a younger child to help me with my washing. I said that I would be fine and started out doing the washing by myself but someone almost inevitably came to assist me and show me the proper way to get your clothes clean. During my time in the field I was almost never left alone or given any private time for myself. Whenever I needed to go anywhere, whether it be to the doctor, to town, or even to the water pump I was almost always accompanied by another individual, at times even a young child. After dark, I and the other woman and children were not allowed to leave the boma as it was considered

dangerous and unsafe. When I had asked one of the young women in the boma where I might find a quiet place to work uninterrupted I was surprised when she asked me the question of whether or not I was considered suicide. I was shocked and told her that I would never do this, but she explained that according to their culture when someone wanted to be left alone and away from other people this was a bad sign and that the person may harm themselves.

I had also planned and envisioned a fairly rigorous work schedule of working seven days a week. After talking with my research assistant and driver and spending a few days in the village I realized that my plans and my schedule had to be changed almost on a daily basis. We changed our schedule to work around the family and the individuals we would be working with to accommodate their schedules. Work did not start until the cows were milked and sent to graze. We would break for lunch around 1 pm till 2pm and continue working until about 6pm when the cows returned. “Village time” turned out to be much more different than expected so my schedule had to become more flexible to meet the needs of the community.

Little did I know these first negotiations set the tone for the rest of my stay and my incorporation as a member of my host family and the community. These negotiations were influenced by a number of different perspectives and variables including that I was a female, an American, single, highly educated, and white. All of these variables influenced my positions and roles within the community. A few months into my work, there was a misunderstanding between me and my driver. The community intervened to help to solve the problem and rectify the situation. Late into the work, my research assistant got another job and was moving to another city. The community came together

to help me find new research assistants. As time passed, my relationships within the community and between individuals were strengthened and I gained further acceptance into my host family and the whole community.

In the United States, I am most often called by my given name Allison. In some cases, such as my immediate family or close friends, I am known by a common nickname. In the United States I am considered as a daughter, a granddaughter, a niece, cousin, a friend, and a student. In the village, my social position and roles changed and so did my name and what people called me. Most of the villagers did not know my real name. Because of my status as an American and my level of education, I was perceived by many people to be wealthy and in a higher social position. Soon after my arrival, I was given the Maasai name Nongishu, meaning “woman with many cows.” This name implied a sense of wealth as the more cows an individual has the wealthier the individual. Americans and other foreigners in general are considered to be much wealthier than any Tanzanian in part due to their perception and representations of the western world and the quality of life in the west. My wealth was exemplified in my ability to travel, to study and stay in school for so long, to not have a job besides that of doing research, and my ability to purchase a vehicle. My social role and responsibilities in the community changed over time. I became known as Shangazi, meaning “aunt” to the young children in the boma. I was expected to at least try and participate in basic chores and life in the boma. Since I was not very good at milking cows my responsibility was to look after the younger children and to get firewood ready for the evening meal. My resources, such as the car, were considered by the people I stayed with to also be their resources to help and

assist them when needed. For example, I would help the women carry their food that they would sell on Fridays into the market and I would also use my vehicle to take individuals to the hospital when needed. If the family needed additional supplies, such as vegetables or rice I was expected to go a buy more or at least contribute to the wellbeing of the family. Whenever I left the village to go to town I would always bring something back such as candy, fruit, or vegetables to give to my host family and the children. One example of this was that as a gift to my host family, and also for my own usage, I fixed the broken solar panels in the family home which was then used to charge everyone's phones, lights, and my laptop computer.

By the end of my stay, I felt I was truly a member of the family and a member of the community. The community had invited me to a number of social events and ceremonies including several marriage celebrations and a circumcision ceremony. I was no longer called the word for foreigner or white person, which is *mzungu* in Swahili, by members of the community. I was instructed and given particular social tasks such as helping to watch the small children and collecting maize from the farm. I did not fully realize the extent to which I had become part of the community till it was time for me to say goodbye and return to the United States. When my host family and I were in tears I realized how much of an important part of my life that they had become. I had a responsibility to them to complete this project and to tell others about my experience with this Maasai community

Entry into the Field



Figure 5: Entry into the field: I am explaining the research project to Maasai family. Source: Allison Kotowicz 2012

Before entering the field I had decided to work closely with 3-4 families in the village. Through consultation with my research assistant three of the families that I worked with were identified prior to my arrival. I entered the field by my research assistant. The other two families were identified soon after I arrived in the village. I decided to work with families in one community that way I was able to insure in my study sample different socio-economic status as defined by the local Maasai community, and identified by my research assistant to reflect the local dynamics in the community. Two of the families were from lower socio-economic backgrounds, two families from the middle and one family was from the upper class. I spent the first half of my stay in the field becoming familiar with Maa, the Maasai language and culture and getting to know

the families and the community. I created kinship charts for each family to understand relationships between individuals within each family and to keep track of who could be interviewed and who could not be interviewed. My weekly schedule included visits with each family when possible. Despite my best efforts this schedule varied depending on the weather and village time. Before meeting the families, my research assistant went to each of the homesteads explaining my project and asking for their consent. I spent time with all of the families in participant observation activities to gain familiarity and trust within the community. I tried to visit each family once a week as weather and time permitted. During these visits I would check-in on each family asking about how they were doing and catching up on the news of the family. I would also inform the family of the progress of the research and when they would expect me next. Often times these visits were accompanied by tea or food. I would also try to bring candy, toys, or small gifts especially for the children in the boma. Participant/observation activities included learning how to do the beadwork with the women, helping to watch young children, working on the farm, watching how the family took care of cattle, and helping to fetch water and firewood. Moreover, I was also schooled in the appropriate greetings and language of the Maasai. I was not very good at working with the cattle, so my job was often to look after the children while their mothers were busy milking the cows and starting to prepare for meal time. Almost every week, I would attend market day that was held each Friday. The older women in the homestead sold rice and soda at the market. I would go to the market to buy and eat meat with the warriors, which was a treat since this was one of the only times in which we would get meat. I bought the traditional Maasai clothing and had the women where I was staying make the local ornaments for me. As a

way to better understand my research project and my purpose in the community, I invited members of all of the families to come to a meeting held at a local church. At that meeting, I described my research to them and provided an opportunity for them to ask questions about myself and the project. These activities occurred before the in-depth interviews, the core of the research project, could be conducted. In this stage entry into the field focused on establishing relationships in the field. These activities lasted from November 2011-January 2012.



Figure 6: I am helping clean containers used to store cow's milk. Source: Allison Kotowicz, 2012.

During the second phase of my stay in the field from February 2012-April 2012, I began to conduct in-depth interviews with the five families. While trying to work out a schedule for the interview, one thing that you learn quickly in Tanzania, especially in the

villages; time works differently, life is at a much slower pace; things happen when they happen not necessarily when you want them to happen and you cannot force anything. I tried to maintain a work week schedule of Monday through Thursday, reserving Fridays for market days and Saturdays and Sundays as “off” days. This schedule allowed time for my research assistant to go to town to spend time with his wife. This schedule often had to be modified depending upon the weather, who was available to be interviewed that day and depending on the activities at the boma. Before the actual interview started the participants were read a verbal consent script approved by the IRB which was read to them in the language that they were most comfortable with and contained a description of the research project and the research methods. After verbal consent was given, the interviews proceed. The interviews were conducted in the language in which the interviewee was most familiar and comfortable, ranging from English to Kiswahili to Maasai and mixture of everything in between. Interviews were conducted in the interviewee’s homestead. We started with the family that was the furthest distance away from us since it was the rainy season and the roads were becoming impassable. I conducted my study worked with a total of five research assistants/translators each from the same family. In total, I conducted approximately 71 in-depth interviews. The gender and age of the participants from the five families are found in the tables below.

	Elder (45+ yrs old)	Middle Aged (35-44 yrs old)	Youth (18-34 yrs old)
Male	5	1	25
Female	15	5	20

The interview questions were divided into nine categories: 1)personal/background information; 2)language history; 3)education; 4)“culture of the cow”; 5) clothing;

6)religion; 7)ceremonies (rites of passage/rituals); 8)insider/outsider perspective on identity; and 9)gender. The first category of personal/background information asked questions such as a person’s name, whether or not they had multiple names such as a Maasai and a Swahili name, and in what year the participant was born. The second category, language history, asked questions regarding what languages participants spoke and when and how they learned other languages, what language did they primarily use and in what context did they use the each language, and whether or not the individual mixed the different languages they knew and in what contexts did they mixed the languages. The third category, education, asked the participants to describe the level of education that they had received and where they went to school, how they thought that education had affected their lives, and what sort of informal education did they receive at home from their parents. Participants were also asked how they thought education had changed the lives of the Maasai people and culture. They were asked to critique in what ways education could hurt and help the culture of the Maasai people. The fourth category of participants’ questions was about the “culture of the cow”. In this category participants were asked to describe their daily work, whether or not they owned livestock or cattle, if they ever went to the city and where they went, and what they did in their leisure time. This category of questions asked participant questions about how and why cows are important to the Maasai, as well as how has the Maasai way of life changed, what are the challenges that the Maasai face as a pastoral people, and if they thought the Maasai would continue to raise cattle in the future and if not, what would happen to the Maasai people and their culture. The fifth category asked participants to describe the type of clothing that they were currently wearing at the time of the interview, if they ever

wore other styles of clothing, if the clothing he/she was wearing was considered to be traditional Maasai clothing. Does traditional Maasai clothing have meaning, and what are the differences in the types of clothing? The sixth category asked participants about their religious beliefs and practices. Did they participate in traditional Maasai religious rituals? The seventh category asked the participants to describe the ceremonies and rituals that they had participated throughout their lifetime. What rituals do all Maasai participate in? They were asked to describe each ritual and then any changes that had occurred to that ritual. The section also included questions asking about their position in the age-set system and if the age-set system has changed over time. The eighth category asked the participants to describe what other tribes or people thought about the Maasai, what the Tanzanian government thought of the Maasai, and what foreigners thought of the Maasai. The final category included questions concerning gender and the distribution of work. The participants were also asked if they could do the opposite gender's work and if the positions and responsibilities of men and women have changed?



Figure 7: Conducting interview with Maasai woman. Source: Allison Kotowicz, 2012.

When closing, each interview, participants were asked what they would like people in the United States, to know about the Maasai. They were also given the opportunity to ask any questions. Typical questions asked of myself included why I decided to work with the Maasai, what was life like in America, and what benefit would the research have to the community. I would also get questions asking if I was married or had any children. The participants were then asked whether if we could take a photograph. The participant was also given a sheet containing the information of the researcher and the researcher's institution, the Institutional Review Board Information, and contact information for the research assistants in case they had any questions, comments or concerns and to keep for their records.

Exiting the Field

The last two months of my stay in Tanzania (May 2012-June 2013) was spent preparing to leave the field. I had to say goodbye to all of the participants. I promised that I would send copies of the thesis, photos, and video I took of each family. I also gave a good-bye and thank you party at a local church. For the party one goat was slaughtered, rice, vegetables, soda, and water were served. This was my way of showing my appreciation and thanking all of the people who helped and participated in my research. At the end of the party, and before everyone left, the eldest woman and the eldest man in attendance asked me to kneel, they then placed their hands on my head while everyone in the congregation gave me a blessing. My goodbyes with the family I lived with were emotional. I did not want to leave Tanzania but knew that I had to leave so that one day I would be able to return.

Upon my return to the United States, mid-June 2012, I began the long process of transcription, data analysis, and write-up. Due to the volume of data collected, I conducted an inventory to ascertain the categories of interviews I had collected. I selected 9 representative interviews to be transcribed and analyzed for this thesis. These interviews were translated consisted of 9 individuals; there is a balance in gender representation, age-sets as well as differing education levels. This subsample of my data is reflective of the answers that I received from the other members of the community. The table below shows the demographic information of my sub-sample of interview participants.

Personal Information/Background

	Elder (45+ yrs old)	Middle Aged (35-44 yrs old)	Youth (18-34 yrs old)
Male	1		3
Female	3	1	1

Limitations of the Study

There were several limitations to this study. The one limitation was the language barrier. My primary language is English. I have studied Swahili in two intensive courses, one in 2007 at the University of Dar es Salaam and the second during the summer of 2010 at the ELCT Language and Orientation School in Morogoro, Tanzania. The first language of the participants in this study was Maa. A few of the elders only spoke Maa. Most individuals spoke some Swahili. Many of the younger participants spoke some English. For those who were able to continue beyond primary school, English was taught. English was often the class medium in secondary schools and at the university. While in the field I spoke a combination of English, Swahili, and Maa. For the in-depth interviews, participants were allowed to choose the language that they felt most comfortable with to be asked and answer questions. Throughout the study I used a research assistant who helped with the organizational aspects of the research activities and also was my primary translator. I also hired a driver, who helped to orient me to the Maasai people and culture. Due to complications in the field, by the end of the study I had worked with five translators. All of the translators had some education beyond secondary school and spoke English, Swahili, and Maasai. Another limitation was transportation. Although a car was purchased and used for the majority of the research period, towards the end of my fieldwork the rainy season began and the roads were washed out. This severely limited my travel to the different families. Three of the

families that participated in this study were located within relatively short walking distance of each other while the other two families required the car to reach. As a result of location and where and who I was staying with, I developed the closest relationships with my host family, who was the family of all but one of my research assistants and translators, and their neighbors who were their close relatives and the family of my driver.

Being a female in the field provided a unique set of challenges and opportunities. Because of my status as an American and my level of education, I was perceived by many people to be wealthy and in a higher social position. My status also contributed in part to my Maasai name, Nongishu, which means woman with many cows. In some situations I was considered to be an honorific male. I think that this was in part due to my being a foreigner, wealthy, and highly educated. For example, I was allowed to spend more time with the men and developed closer relationships with some of the men more so than many other women. I was also able to cross boundaries not open for the Maasai women. For the most part, I was able to move freely between groups of men and women, although age differences were a factor. It was important to my hosts that I be treated well and as a guest even though I insisted that I did not want to be treated any differently. I was always given a seat when I arrived at a boma, even if someone else had to give up their seat. I was always asked whether I needed any help with anything whether it be to carry water to the shower or to help wash my clothes. I was able to get closer to the young warriors more so than the elders. During a meal, Maasai are traditionally separated by gender with the males eating first and being served by the females, however, I was one of the first people served and ate primarily with my research

assistant, driver, and some of the other men in the boma. As time passed, I made a conscious effort to be with the women as I wanted to fit in and follow social customs as much as possible. Even though I ate away from the men, I still ate different food from the rest of the women and was always served before the other women. Thus my status as a college educated American female informed my social status and position within this community.

The following chapters of the thesis are devoted to data analysis. The data analysis is divided into three separate chapters. The first chapter reports on data concerning the Maasai lifestyle of pastoralism and the “culture of the cow”. In this chapter I examine the role and importance of cattle and cows to the Maasai culture and the work divisions within Maasai society. I examine the nature of pastoralism among the Maasai looking at the changes and challenges that Maasai face as pastoralists. This chapter frames the following two chapters. The second data chapter focuses on Maasai clothing choices. In this chapter I describe past and present traditional Maasai clothing and decoration traditions, emphasizing the change from hides to cloth. I conclude the chapter by looking at how clothing is used by the Maasai in differing contexts to signal identity. The final data analysis chapter looks at the Maasai rites of passage rituals, in particular the circumcision ritual that marks the passage from childhood to adulthood for Maasai boys and girls. I give a historical and present day description of the ceremony and the role of the age-set system within Maasai society. I examine the change and the relevance of the circumcision ceremony to the Maasai in the 21st century.

Chapter 4

“Culture of the Cow”



Figure 8: Maasai youth preparing to give cow injection of medicine. Source: Allison Kotowicz, 2012.

Introduction

One of the central points of a person’s or group’s identity is based on their beliefs and observational social behaviors. Our beliefs influence what we do. For example, the choice of what we wear every day. Through our behavior we are signaling 1) group membership; and 2) status and rank in the group; and 3) what we find valuable and what is important to us (Jacobson-Widding 1993; Lindholm 2001). For the Maasai, their worldview is demarcated by the “the culture of the cow.” The culture of the cow influences every aspect of Maasai life from the clothing that individuals wear to the

rituals and rites of passage that mark important phases in an individual's life. Cows for the Maasai are highly valued. The cow symbolizes many things, a nomadic lifestyle pastoralism, food, clothing, and wealth. I would go so far as to say that it defines relationships between individuals and families. Cows are so important to the Maasai that people compose songs, give them names, and decorate their cattle. Cattle define relationships within the Maasai and the perception of the Maasai by other ethnic groups in the area. For example, because many Maasai live in the rural areas of the country, the Maasai are viewed by the state and other ethnic groups as backwards and unprogressive. In their origin myth, the Maasai believe that Engai, or God, gave the Maasai all of the cattle in the world to look after. This belief is used as the justification for the Maasai to accumulate large numbers of cattle and to raid neighboring communities to increase their herd. The Maasai believe that pastoralism is the best lifestyle and they tend to look down on other lifestyles such as hunting and gathering and agriculture. Traditionally Maasai subsisted solely on their cattle, goats, and other livestock for everything from food to clothing. The Maasai diet consisted of meat from their livestock, milk, and blood; however this has changed due to human population increases and decreases in livestock population. The Maasai will only kill wild animals to protect people or cattle, but do not eat the wild animals. The Maasai live in a cattle kraal; homes are arranged in circle, with cattle located in a pen in the center of the property. Traditionally homes were constructed using a shaped wooden frame which was then plastered with a cow dung and mud mixture. Nowadays it is not uncommon to see homes made of concrete or bricks. Both the village and the cattle kraal are protected by large thorny fences. The Maasai homestead is known as an enkag. The sizes of enkags vary depending on the number in

the household. Maasai practice polygamy; a man may take as many wives as he can afford to support. In the area of my study it was not uncommon for a man to have as many as four or five wives. The Maasai are patrilocal, meaning that when a son marries the wife comes to live with him at his father's homestead. As the father ages and the sons begin to marry and have children of their own, the father will gradually pass on responsibility to the eldest son. After the father dies, the eldest son is then responsible for looking after his mother, his younger brothers and sisters, and all of the family's cattle.



Figure 9: Maasai boma with central cattle kraal to protect livestock and surrounding houses. Source: Allison Kotowicz, 2012.

The 21st century, marks the advent of the age of modernization and globalization, in a time where the Maasai subsistence pattern of pastoralism is becoming increasingly difficult to maintain. The Maasai are faced with challenges such as drought, reduction in

the land for grazing and migration, increasing agriculture, famine, and onset of war zones in grazing areas. These factors make pastoralism an increasingly unavailable option. The Maasai culture revolves around the “culture of the cow” and in the 21st century as pastoralism is increasingly becoming harder to maintain as a lifestyle, we must ask the question what will happen to the Maasai when the cow is no longer present and the “culture of the cow” is threatened? In this chapter of data analysis the “culture of the cow” is based upon in-depth interviews with the Maasai, archival data, and participant observations in the field. The archival and participant observation activities ethnographic work helped to identify past and present Maasai cultural traditions in relational to pastoralism and the importance of the cow in Maasai culture.

Role of Cattle/Cows in Maasai Life and Culture

Oh cow is everything I dare say everything. If you go inside there our mattress we use a skin of the cow as a mattress to sleep on and then all food you can see here if no meat we sell cows we get money to buy maize or some rice or everything all these we wearing here all these clothes you see here we sell cows we get money and we buy everything and then we sell them for school fees for everything so I dare say no cow no life for Maasai.

-Expert from Interview Fumo, Male, Age 30

As the above excerpt shows, cattle are everything to the Maasai. Maasai believe that there is no greater possession than cattle. Cattle are life for the Maasai. Cattle provide them with everything that they need food, clothing, housing, and money in order to buy things. For the Maasai, the cattle are like an agriculturalist’s farm. It provides and sustains their lifestyle and culture. Cattle exchange also helps define and maintain social relationships between individuals within the Maasai, for example when a man wishes to marry he must pay a bride price. For the Maasai, that is an agreed upon number of cows

to be given to the bride's family. If you have cash for the bride price, the family will tell you to purchase cows with the money and present the cows as the bride price. In this context, cattle stand in for the value of children. A daughter's value in a household is exchanged and decided in the number of cattle she is worth. By paying bride price in cattle, the families establish a life-long relationship and acknowledge that the daughter and children born in that marriage belong to the husband and his family. They are responsible for them. Without cows a Maasai cannot marry and have children, since cows are also used to support and feed his growing family

So it's the most important thing the two important roles that cows play one is you can't marry you can't have a wife without having cows or we use cows as a bride price to pay to get a wife in our traditional culture that's how you that how it is supposed to be and also the other thing is that we all depend on cows, cows are everything that drive our lives cows are the ones that make us live you having food and everything from cows.

-Excerpt from Interview- Zuberi, Male, Age 63

Today, some Maasai live in urban areas, nevertheless they will still maintain cattle. This is accomplished through connections with the immediate family (father, brother, cousins) and other Maasai who will care for their cattle. Even if a Maasai lives in an urban context they maintain and foster relationships and wealth within the Maasai community. For example, several of my research assistants either had jobs in town or were away at school. During the time that they were away from home, they made arrangements for their cattle to be taken care of by other family members. These individuals would come back home periodically to visit their family and to check their cattle. These individual is also kept informed on how the cattle are being taken care of and if there are any major problem or events, such as an attack on the herd by wild

animals, by the individual(s) in charge of taking care of the cattle while they are away. Today these updates are often accomplished with the use of cell phones.

Beyond economic value, cattle offer to the Maasai the opportunity for education, healthcare, and respect throughout the community. When an individual has to go to the hospital, the Maasai will sell some of their livestock to pay for the medicine. When a child starts to go to school, money from the sale of livestock is used to pay school fees, books, and uniforms. In the past, the Maasai would have bartered with neighboring communities for the goods that they needed. With the introduction of cash economy and capitalism, the Maasai were forced to enter the cash economy and sell their cattle in order to pay for taxes and other goods which are now purchased at local markets. In the following excerpt we hear from a young Maasai woman how cattle give an individual respect and higher social status within the Maasai community.

Also they the cattle make the Maasai life to be proud. If I have cattle I am proud of that because I know that if something happen I have to sell them I get money I have to do but without cattles I will maybe be ignored by the community because even in the meeting I cannot discuss anything because if I run my hands up and maybe explain maybe point to the meeting people will ask themselves is he or she having a cattles, if we agree yes he will be able to contribute if not people will ignore you. So if you don't have cattle, people of they don't respect you also. So cattle make my life to be my economic to be up maybe I depend them on be proud of them and people respect me so that's the big role of the cattle to the life of the Maasai. And also it play the role maybe of if someone get married you have to pay cattle instead of money or everything so also the cattles are making the Maasai life or man maybe they are standing for something important in the life of the Maasai because they are changing a child with cattles. So since cattle are getting the what the same importance of that of the child because a lady is going to be married but what you have to if you have a million of money no one will receive. Go to the market, go buy cattle, bring them here so it play that role also.

Excerpt from Interview- Tawa, Female, Age 27

Work of Men and Women Gender Considerations



Figure 10: Maasai women milking cow. Source: Allison Kotowicz, 2012.

The work and responsibilities of men and women in Maasai culture differ by age and by gender. Most of the responsibility for looking after the cattle and the home fall to the shoulders of the young adults in the community. However recently, the amount of time that the children and youth spend with the cattle is reduced due to a number of factors such as education and work opportunities in the city. Young boys, if they do not go to school or when they are out of school, are responsible for herding the livestock most of the day. Occasionally the Morani will help herd the cattle as well check on the herd periodically. The Morani are considered to be the warriors of the society, responsible for the care and protection of the livestock and the family. These men range in ages from 16-30 and include all young men that have been circumcised within a given period of time. These men will remain warriors for approximately 10-15 years during which they will then move up the age-set system to become elders and a new group of

young men will be circumcised and become the next warriors of the clan . Young girls, whether they go to school or not, are responsible for helping out around the house and looking after the younger children. These activities are controlled by older men and women, they provide direction, advice, and supervision of the younger members of the family. The young adults (approximately 18-30 years old) and adults (approximately age 30-60 years old) in Maasai society are responsible for most of the jobs and work that needs to be done in the boma. Today, all members of the family participate in varying degrees in of farming. If there is no one to look after the cattle or help take care of the homestead, children and young adults may drop out of school or skip several days of school in order to complete tasks that assist the family. If the family has enough money, they may hire other Maasai or neighboring tribes such as the WaGogo. However this can cause problems since some Maasai believe that non-family members will not take as good care of the cattle because they are not the owners of the cattle and believe that family membership will do a better job at looking after the animals.

Young adult men and adult men are responsible for taking care of the cattle. It's their job to make sure that the herd is healthy. When a Maasai determines that a cow is a sick cow and needs to be treated it is his responsibility to go to purchase medicine and then inject the medicine into the cow. They are the builders for the family. They make sure that the cattle kraal is built and kept in good condition. The cattle kraal is made of tree branches, usually acacia trees which have long spiny thorns. The kraal is used to protect the cattle at night. The men are also responsible for building the modern houses that are made from brick or concrete. As the Maasai move around less frequently with their cattle, they are building more permanent, modern houses. In the past the Maasai

were nomadic, moving their homes and cattle frequently in order to find water and grazing land. If cattle or other livestock become lost it is morani's responsibility to go out and find the lost animal(s). The morani and older men are responsible for providing security to their families, the community, and the livestock. When there is not enough food in the home, the men go to sell the cows and livestock at the markets. The older men monitor and manage the economic aspects of the day to day life in the boma.



Figure 13: Traditional Maasai home built from a wooden frame and then covered in mud. Source: Allison Kotowicz, 2012.

For young women, roles and responsibilities mainly revolve around the domestic domain. This means they are responsible for all meals, they must milk the cows, twice a day, in the morning and in the evening. With respect to the cows, they manage the cattle; they wean calf from their mothers and then assume the responsibility of looking after the

calves. They are responsible for everything that goes on in their homes especially food processing and preparation which includes preparing drinks and food for family members as well as guest's visit. They are responsible for making the beds which consist of a platform like surface covered by cow hide although there are some Maasai homes that have western style beds with foam mattresses. Women's work is largely centered in the domestic sphere where they maintain the household, make sure the yard is clean, wash clothes and dishes, fetch water and firewood, and looking after the children in the boma. In the past, when the Maasai were nomadic houses were made by women out of mud and cow dung, although nowadays men will assist women in building houses out of concrete and bricks. In the past before the change in clothing, women were also responsible for making clothes out of animal hides. In their free time women will make jewelry and decorations for the whole family and also to sell in town, at local markets, or to tourists. Some women will sell milk in the villages or goods and food at the markets. These jobs allow women to expand their social relationships and market goods to the broader community which includes the local and international marketplace.



Figure 12: Maasai home built from bricks which are considered to be modern than the traditional Maasai homes. Source: Allison Kotowicz, 2012.

Cultural traditions and lifestyles are learned and passed from one generation to the next generation. In the past, boys and girls were educated at home by parents and grandparents. Girls with their mothers, aunts, and grandmothers and boys with their father, uncles and grandfathers. The transmission of culture activities guided a person's understanding of how to behave within the Maasai community and the ways of traditional Maasai culture. Today, children attend government or private schools where they are taught a curriculum based on national standards rather than traditional Maasai beliefs and practices. There is growing currency in the value of education, women and girls recognize the importance of education as relative to their status in the family and the possibilities to earn a living. Although more girls and women are going to school than in

the past. Nevertheless, there still remains a persistent gender gap in the number of boys versus the number of girls that go to school. Given limited resources, families often chose to invest in the education of males. This has resulted in a disparity in the number of males versus females who are educated, especially beyond the primary school level into secondary school and university. In the culture of the cow—females are bartered for through bride price and all members of the family realize that at some point females in the family will depart to join another family. Once a girl is of the appropriate age to get married, she may be taken out of school or decide to leave school in order to be married. A girl may decide to put off any further education until after she is married. This may be due in part to the fact that once a woman is married, her assets and values go with her, then benefiting her husband's family, not her natal family.

According to the Maasai interviewed, the jobs and responsibilities of men and women have not changed much overtime. In general, for a woman to do a man's work or for a man to do woman's work there must be a reason such as there isn't a member of the opposite sex around that can do it for them. Gender is in part defined and maintained by the work that individuals do. If a man is seen doing woman's work people question his masculinity and why he is doing this work. If there is a woman around who can do this work for him it is expected that she does that work for the man. If a woman is seen doing a man's work it is believed that there is no man around to do this work, for example she may be widowed or her children are too young to help around the home. However, there seems to be more freedom for men to do women's work than it is for a woman to do a man's work.

Changes in Pastoralist Lifestyle



Figure 9: Example of Maasai farm growing maize. Source: Allison Kotowicz, 2012.

There have been many changes to the pastoralist lifestyle. The Maasai have diversified their livelihoods. In the past the Maasai relied solely on their livestock to provide them with food, clothing, and the necessities of life. Nowadays, many Maasai do not depend solely on cattle for their livelihood. All of the Maasai families in this study participated in farming to supplement their diet and income. Some Maasai also participated in small business ventures such as the selling of milk, goods or food in the marketplace as well as the making and selling jewelry. Today, the Maasai are choosing to live close to roads and villages. With a more settled lifestyle Maasai are no longer nomadic, and do not live with the daily task of searching for grazing land and water for their cattle. The following quote describes the conditions in the past when the Maasai had access to more land to graze their cattle and could move about with few restrictions.

Today land used for agriculture is increasing while open land for cattle and pastoralists grazing is shrinking.

Other differences may be due to this there is no movement nowadays Maasai maybe settle and build a good house but during that time they just move and they just make things like huts but not house so they just move after about 2 months they move from one place to another and nowadays even if they just keep cattle but they educate children and they involve themselves in churches, they go to villages, they just buy food, they just cultivating shambas so that is changes even if they keep animals.

-Excerpt from Interview- Erevu, Male, Age 32r

Challenges to Pastoralist Lifestyle

In the twenty-first century the Maasai are face with many challenges in their efforts to maintain a pastoralist lifestyle. The first challenge is the environment. Due to increasing land shortages and drought, often there is not enough food or water for cattle. Because of the decreasing access to land, there is less and less land available to raise cattle. This leads to conflicts between farmers and pastoralists over land . Livestock can enter on to a farmer's land and eat or destroy their crops causing disputes between pastoralists and farmers. The following quote illustrates some the problems that the Maasai face as a result of conflicts with the government and with neighboring agricultural communities.

The first challenge is environment because no space for keeping a lot of cattles, one. Two, there is I don't know how I can explain because the government also taking a role now of reducing the cattle of the Maasai on not a proper way because they are coming to every boma, they are saying you have to sell these cattles, so the Maasai they don't know how to sell all of the cattles while the economics of their lives or their families depending on cattles. So that's also a big challenge because I remember something on, it was 2009, it was 2008 or 2009, so eviction was done there at Kilosa. So people even now, we are talking here, people are very poor because the government was taking a lot of cattles and sell them on a low price, so now they some of the children they don't want they are not

attending to school because their parents now they are poor so we saw that the Maasai now are getting challenges on how to keep their cattles because the government also know that the Maasai themselves because the first thing is the conflict the farmer between the farmer and the Maasai, the pastoralist. So what because of environment the farmers are cultivating the environment and the Maasai are at the same times grazing their cattles on the round places so when the cattle of the Maasai enter on maybe shamba of someone the conflict is rising and the Maasai ahh sometimes are forced to pay a lot of money because they cattles maybe to enter on some the shamba of someone. So they are getting a lot of challenges because of environment and the government roles, so of them are not good for the Maasai life.

-Excerpt from Interview- Tawa, Female, Age 27

The care of the cattle is central to the Maasai. A second challenge is the increase in the number of diseases in cattle and the expensive cost of medicine to treat these diseases. Cattle as well as other livestock can fall prey to numerous diseases which require western medicine, usually in the form of an injection. In order to keep their herds healthy, Maasai must now purchase medicine and regularly inject their cattle. This medicine is purchased in town or in the local village using money that has been obtained through the sale of other livestock.

So yeah it has been different so far and the most difference is you know the land problem that before the land was free and cows really had free land to use like they could go anywhere but nowadays there are many people has increased and the land become small and so land for cows has been really small and its difficult nowadays to raise cows nowadays because they have the limitation of land and also the diseases have increased too much and nowadays back in years ago the Maasai didn't have a lot of disease and they may not even inject a cow for year(s) they may not have sick cow over the years but now like every day you have to inject the cow and have different medicines just like people.

Excerpt from Interview- Zuberi, Male, Age 63

A third challenge is that the younger generation does not care or value cows like the elders. Dynamics of social change have resulted in a shift in values. For them their

lifestyle options linked with the culture of the cow is not their only choice. For today's Maasai, external factors such as the opportunity to go to school impacts how a young Maasai envisions his/her life chances. Additionally, in the African context schooling is not free, parents must pay school fees which include school uniforms, books, schools supplies and addition fees for library and/or computer lab use. The Maasai who send their children to school must sell cattle to pay school fees. When the children are away at school, they are absent from home and unable to look after the cattle. In these instances the Maasai resort to hiring outsiders or members from other tribes to look after their livestock. Children through education are socialized to participate in a more global context, a world dominated by industry and agriculture. As a result, cattle and livestock are seen as less important for accessing societal resources, since a person can live without cattle and get a job in the city or town. The Maasai children are becoming increasingly removed from traditional Maasai culture and the culture of the cow when they enter school. Many choose to move into the cities and town to find work. Moving to the cities and towns to find work is a contentious issue because as young men and women move they are not able to care for the family livestock and they are also introduced to elements outside of the Maasai traditional culture. In the following quote, we see the importance of sending children to school along with the realization that the children will no longer be performing their traditional roles in Maasai culture, such as the herding of cattle.

So the other most challenge that we face is that every Maasai now like most of them or if any Maasai realize how important school is he would want to send all his kids to school and if you want to send all the kids to school cause you would not want some to stay and some to go because once you realize you will think education is the most gift to any kid and that it would be difficult to think of raising cows at the same time as sending kids to school because also small kids were the ones who were supposed to learn how to raise the cows and so they can't do both they can't go to school and raise the cows so once they go to school we can't have someone to take care of the cows or to take them away

and graze them and whatever so that's the most challenge that we're facing otherwise we have to live you know raising cows and taking all the kids to school or stop them so that's the most challenge in raising cows.

-Excerpt from Interview- Zuberi, Male, Age 63

Maasai parents are faced with the challenge of knowing the importance of education to their future and the future of their children however it comes at a price. These children will not spend the majority of their time taking care of the cattle and learning Maasai traditional culture and lifestyle. Maasai elders must decide how best to prepare their children for tomorrow's world while still trying to maintain the traditional values associated with being Maasai. Maasai parents and elders are crucial in the transmission of Maasai traditional values and culture. The older generations teach the younger generations and help them to learn the traditions of Maasai culture. This transmission of Maasai traditional culture is often undermined or given less importance as more and more Maasai children attend private and government funded schools. In school, Maasai children are taught about the outside world, other lifestyles, and cultures and yet when they return home they enter the world of the Maasai lifestyle and culture. The Maasai face a constant struggle of revaluation of their traditional lifestyle and culture in the face of change from a globalized world. Within the Maasai this is a contentious issue because many Maasai do not want to change their traditional lifestyle and culture but they also recognize that some change is necessarily, for example schooling for the children, in order for the Maasai to survive and thrive in the future.

Future of Pastoralist Lifestyle and the “Culture of the Cow”

For most of the interviewees, the future of a pastoralist lifestyle is bleak . All but two individuals, out of a total of nine individuals, believed that one day the Maasai as a pastoralism group will cease to exist. Their bleak forecast is due to a number of challenges and changes. First of all, the land that is set aside for grazing cattle is diminishing while the demand for farming and agriculture, whether for subsistence or cash crops, continues to grow. There is no longer any place for cattle. Also a growing number of Maasai are becoming more educated. They spend less time participating in village life, at the bomas with their families, community members, and their cattle and increasingly more time in town. These changes lead to a reduction in the role of cattle in younger people's lives as illustrated in the quote below.

He say that because due to these changes Maasai for example Maasai go to school and does not need to come to live in this community maybe they need to be there at town and maybe they look they are nursing or they teachers they don't need to come to this place so at the future maybe this life will be destroyed living with cattle because no one be kept/come care to care cattle because they are going to be educated and then they going to live at town and things like that and of course even this time people are just try to reduce cattle because of the no land for raising these cattle so they just reduce even the government say this place is not for cattle and you see maybe for shambas will be for town so they come to destroy this area so at the end all or the future we don't have a place for the cattle.

Excerpt from Interview- Sefu, Male, Age 20

For those individuals and families who have received education life will be easier for them, but for those individuals and families where members have received no education life will remain hard because without cows they have nothing, and they will not have the means do anything else. They depend on the cattle for everything. This community is beginning to feel and see the changes that education has brought to the

Maasai, especially the opportunity to make different life choices and choose different lifestyles. This includes a life where cattle are no longer central to an individual's life. The question then becomes, will cattle remain a salient feature of Maasai identity or will the importance of cattle in Maasai life and culture be reduced or replaced with something else? The following quotations illustrate that for many Maasai, a future life without cattle is perceived as a difficult life, filled with uncertainty and change.

The Maasai they will be, the Maasai life will be difficult because if we, we observe now that some of the Maasai are there at towns they don't have education, they don't have cattles so they are going to town maybe before being security and being paid maybe for that work which is not good for them. So if the Maasai life will be, because the Maasai life depending on cattles, so if cattles will be disappeared so no life for the Maasai again because the Maasai all of them will remove and go to towns and not staying at forests because we are staying here at forests and villages because of cattles. If we don't have cattles we have to go town maybe for making some decoration, I observe some mamas there at town they are making decorations, they are selling to the people, they get some money for their lives. So if no cattle no life for the Maasai.

-Excerpt from Interview- Tawa, Female, Age 27

Although, most of the Maasai interviewed believed that the future of the pastoralist lifestyle and the “culture of the cow” is bleak, there was a significant difference in generational responses to the future. In general, the younger generation seemed more hopeful about the future of the Maasai. For them, the decrease in the “culture of the cow” did not spell disaster for the Maasai, only change and a future in which education and other employment options play a significant role in the lifestyle of the Maasai. For the younger generation, these changes do not necessarily coincide with the downfall of Maasai culture. For the older generation, the decline in the pastoralist lifestyle spells disaster for the Maasai and their culture, especially if no one on the family was educated. For them life without cows, signals no life for the Maasai.

Conclusion

The culture of the cow is a lifestyle, a way of being for the Maasai that defines who they are as individuals and as a cultural group. The culture of the cow represents an ideal subsistence pattern of relying primary on cattle and other small livestock to earn a living and provide one with everything that is needed to have a good life. For the Maasai, the culture of the cow permeates all aspects of life from the type of traditional clothing that is worn, to their diet, and to their rites of passage. Cows are used to define relationships within and between families. The culture of the cow for the Maasai is a fundamental part of their identity. To define the Maasai without cattle or livestock would be inconceivable to many people. For many of the Maasai themselves, life without cows would be no life at all. The Maasai would not continue to exist if they no longer had cattle. In the words of one elder they would become like all of the other tribes in Tanzania who have left their traditional culture behind.

The culture of the cow is a vested interest, both internal and external to the Maasai. The presence or absence of the culture of the cow helps define and reshape what it means to be Maasai and a pastoralist in the 21st century. Each individual and group has different stakeholders and interests in whether or not change occurs. When we look at the changes happening around and to the culture of the cow we see that there is a difference in responses based upon age-sets. For the older age-sets, cattle are an integral part of what it means to be Maasai-past, present, and future. Losing the culture of the cow means losing traditional Maasai culture and what it means to a Maasai. The younger age-sets attitude toward the culture of the cow, however, is much more varied. In general, the youth have a more positive outlook for Maasai culture and identity than older age-sets. Being Maasai for the younger age-sets is not solely defined by a subsistence

pattern centered on cattle and other livestock. Many of the youth are becoming more educated, are employed, and may have homes both in the rural areas and in the urban areas. They may live and work in the city but still own cattle that are kept at the family homestead.

For the Tanzanian government, the current system of Maasai pastoralism has been seen as unproductive and not as prosperous to the Gross National Product as agriculture. However, the government does bring in a significant amount of money from tourism, which the Maasai may play pivotal role. When foreigners come to Africa, part of what they expect to see are groups like the Maasai living a more primitive, simpler life at one with nature. This representation of Africa as primitive, however, may not be in line with the image that the national government wants to portray of Tanzania as a modern, developed country continuing to make progress in the 21st Century. The international community also plays a role in how groups and tribes are represented and their interest's brought onto the world stage. For example, within the international community there is to greater recognition of indigenous rights, which is best exemplified by the UN Charter of Indigenous Rights.

A more specific example of this conflict of interest within the culture of the cow is the changing of residential patterns within the Maasai and the national governments and international communities focus on particular lifestyles and development models. The older age sets, especially members of the eldest age set, remember a time in their lives when they lived solely in the bush with their livestock, away from the towns, villages and roads. Life for them was solely centered on the family boma and what the cows provided. As time has passed, we see, especially for the younger age sets, family

bomas being built closer to the villages and roads allowing easy access to village or city life. Some of the youth even maintain two homes, one in the city and one in the bush. Their lives in the city are centered on their employment while their lives in the bush are centered on the family and cattle.

While the national government recognizes that the Maasai bring in money from tourism with their traditional pastoralist lifestyle, they still favor a largely agricultural model of growth and subsistence over pastoralism. Agriculture accounts for a large portion of the gross national product and the government has in the past and still now promotes farmers interests over the interest of pastoralists. Pastoralists like the Maasai have been moved by the national government from their current homes for a number of different reasons including but not limited to more room for agriculture and more land for national parks and wildlife conservation. In addition to this we also see a history of the national government trying to promote and even force the Maasai to sell their cattle, for example through the imposition of taxes, and enter the global cash market.

What we see from this data is that the culture of the cow is a part of Maasai identity that is negotiated on a number of different levels including the local, national, and international levels. Within these different levels exists a continuum of perspectives. Not every Maasai or every individual within the national government or the international community sees Maasai identity and the culture of the cow in the same way. Identity is always negotiated and constantly changing.

Given the changes and challenges to a pastoral lifestyle, we are left with many questions. What will happen to the culture of the cow? What will happen to the Maasai identity when pastoralism and the cow are no longer central to their lives? What will

Maasai identity and culture look like in the future? With the culture of the cow increasingly taking a backseat, how will the culture of the cow be redefined by future generations of Maasai? The quote below illustrates one young man's opinion of what will happen to the culture of the cow and the Maasai.

A: so what do you think will happen to the culture? Do you think the culture will survive without cows?

P: No we normally depend on cows and if we don't have anywhere to store them that will be a very big problem for us not only cows even a tribe the rules and taboos of the society are going to stop without the cows I think cows making everybody to go with the step of their duties in a society and in a family also. For example for the all society here if you go at twilight before twilight you see everybody at home here because everybody have to make sure that all the cows have come from the bush and everything is safe then for the ladies everybody you see with a calabashes going to milking them and then in the morning the early morning before after dawn you see everybody's milking cows for ladies but for men's they have to go make sure every cows is fine healthy or sick if you see any sick you go to take care meaning to treat them so if those cows are not there you can find everybody just hovering by the villages all the time like other tribes you can see them yes.

-Excerpt from Interview- Fumo, Male, Age 30

When asked whether the Maasai culture would be able to survive without cows, the answer was almost always no. Without cows will Maasai culture continue to exist? They said that they will become just like the other tribes who left their traditions and culture and enter into a new world culture with globalization but still be able to survive. For the Maasai their culture and traditions revolve around keeping cattle and pastoralism. Once that is taken away from them, this new generation must forge ahead and pursue new ideas of what it means to be Maasai in the context of decreased or no pastoralism.

A; Does he think it's possible to keep Maasai culture and tradition and still live more modern and global life?

P: So he think it would be impossible yeah because as he said before that you know there is two things that destroying the culture these things are not bad to receive them but it's actually destroying it its you can see it and its education and churches because some churches I think having this traditional is sinful so it's a way of pushing Maasai by force to leave their culture if they would believe that its sinful to have their jewelries and stuff and one other thing is that education when you see that kids go to school they will have a school uniform that uniform doesn't involve the traditional stuff and so that will keep the kid for not even having their traditional outfits and everything so they kid cannot be at school and at the same time raising the cows so that would leave and everyone think that school is the most important and that everyone should have and so it would be difficult to still have the cows.

-Excerpt from Interview- Zuberi, Male, Age 63

As we can see, the culture of the cow is fundamental, and is part of the social fabric of Maasai culture. Cattle represent an ideal lifestyle of semi-nomadic pastoralism. The importance of cattle can be seen in the relationships and social structure of the Maasai, in the clothing that they wear, and in the rituals they practice. All aspects of the Maasai way of life are connected to pastoralism and the importance of the cow. As pastoralism is becoming an increasingly difficult lifestyle to maintain, the Maasai are faced with difficult choices and changes of what will happen to their way of life and culture. We see that Maasai identity and culture, like the culture of the cow, is transforming and Maasai are now redefining and re-conceptualizing their identity. In the following data chapters discussion will focus on a more in-depth analysis of Maasai symbols traditional clothing and the practices of rites of passage that include circumcision rituals that mark the transition from childhood to adulthood or Maasai boys and girls. Like the culture of the cow, traditional clothing and rites of passage are important aspects of Maasai identity that are transforming in the 21st century.

Chapter 5



Figure 14: Maasai women working in a group on beadwork for their families.. Source: Allison Kotowicz, 2012.

Clothing

In this study, clothing is a visible symbol of one's identity, a symbol which has multiple meaning and uses and is negotiated depending upon context .

“Everyone is familiar with the image ‘knows’ the Maasai. Men wearing red capes while balancing on one leg and a long spear, gazing out over the semi-arid plains stretching endlessly to the horizon, or women heavily bedecked in beads, stare out at us from countless coffee-table books and tourists’ snapshots. Uncowed by their neighbors, colonial conquest, or modernization, they stand in proud mute testimony to a vanishing African world” (Spear: 1).

The Maasai serve as iconic symbol of Africa. This image represents a static perception of the wildness, backwardness, and unchanging traditions. For many, this image of the Maasai evokes feelings of a romanticized past of oneness with nature. For many the Maasai are symbols of Africa's past, a past that should be discarded for a more modern, globalized and developed vision of Africa. Today the Maasai negotiate their choices of clothing across multiple settings. Since traditional clothing has multiple meanings it is a context specific and can be contentious.

Among the most salient features of the Maasai, is their physical appearance are the Maasai traditional clothing, decorations and physical appearance. In today's world, internal and external forces are having an effect on Maasai clothing. The composition of clothing for the Maasai is linked to the availability of local resources. In the past resources centered on their livestock. Traditional Maasai clothing was made from the hides of goats and sheep, it was handmade, labor intensive, and only made by women. It was a response to globalization and participation in the world market, has generated influential changes in traditional clothing. The Maasai now have access to imported cloth from Southeast Asia, which is already premade and ready to wear. All that needs to be done with the clothing is provide pins and the necessary jewelry and accessories. With the change from hides to cloth, ready to wear cloth clothing Maasai have entered into the global economy. Clothing as a representation of the Maasai and their physical appearance are ever changing expressions of both individual and group identity. This is reflective of how the notion of tradition is a fluid, dynamic concept.

This study documents the changes in Maasai clothing that have occurred over the past decades. In this section, I will examine clothing as a symbol of identity. The

discussion will focus on contrasting social change in the traditional Maasai clothing and decorations. The dynamics of modernity have generated new choices of clothing available to the Maasai. This section concludes with a description of the choice of clothing an individual chooses to wear in different environments, examines the differing cultural contexts in which Maasai negotiate the meaning of types of clothing. The foci of this section are: What is considered to be traditional Maasai clothing? What are factors that are influencing social change? What are clothing choices that Maasai make? What social contexts affect the type of clothing Maasai choose to wear? How and in what ways do these choices situate one's identity?



Figure 15: Maasai family at master's graduation ceremony wearing a mixture of traditional Maasai clothing and western style clothing. Source: Allison Kotowicz, 2012.

Clothing as a Symbol

Clothing is a visible symbol of identity that is used consciously and unconsciously to manipulate and portray an image at any given time. All cultures use clothing and body decorations to signify group identification. Within the US, we perceive the wearing of gold rings on the left hand to symbolize that an individual is married or the clerical collar, to denote that one is a Christian priest or pastor. “They are material signs of personal involvement and relations, of ceremonial occasion, and above all of personal and social identity of various kinds” (Klumpp & Kratz: 195). For the Maasai clothing symbolizes ethnic group membership, involvement in a pastoralist lifestyle, as well as where an individual is one’s social position within the lifecycle of the Maasai. From these they are able to decide their roles and responsibilities associated with a particular stage of their lives. When asked if the Maasai traditional clothing had any symbolic meaning replies varied. Maasai respondents pointed out that clothing was their way to differentiation between the different stages in the age-set system and lifecycle. The following interview excerpt describes how clothing can distinguish people of different age sets and whether or not an individual is married or single.

Yes they have symbolic meaning because when I’m wearing maybe two colors I mean that I’m married or I’m going to be married but those who are wearing one color or one clothes so they are not maybe they are not allowed to be married on that time so if they will reach that age of being married they will have to get two and on the time of being married arised they have to be to wear two so he she wear two are going to be married so this also differentiate. Also some other people are differentiation if you wear maybe eh this one at the top so you mean on some age on some age system maybe the age you are maybe the age maybe you are the age of korianga or the age kisaroni so but not much that way a simple way but sometime happen if we wear on this way the people translate that as you are a kisaroni or you are a korianga or whatever.

-Excerpt from Interview- Tawa, Female, Age 27

For the Maasai, clothing is a cultural symbol, of respect, and a symbol that tells everyone that you are Maasai. By the type and style of clothing and jewelry an

individual wears, one can tell whether an individual is male or female, married or single, and their age-set . The age-set groupings mediates all social relations and behavior, for example, if you are women or a child the proper greeting for anyone who is older than you is to bow your head and wait until the elder places a hand on your head in the symbol of a blessing. Even when Maasai are in the city they recognize each other and proceed with the proper greeting and social conventions as the following quote illustrates.

So it is a respect and also to show they Maasai the true color of Maasai that this a Maasai to introduce them

-Excerpt from Interview- Rahma+Nia, Females, Age 79

The clothing that the Maasai wear is not only a symbol on a tribal level but it is also a symbol on a national and international level. On all levels, clothing is a salient symbol of the Maasai and their culture, meaning generating different things to different people depending on their location and relationship to the Maasai. The quote below illustrates that Maasai clothes are symbols representative of Maasai culture and that the Maasai are aware of how they are recognized by non-Maasai.

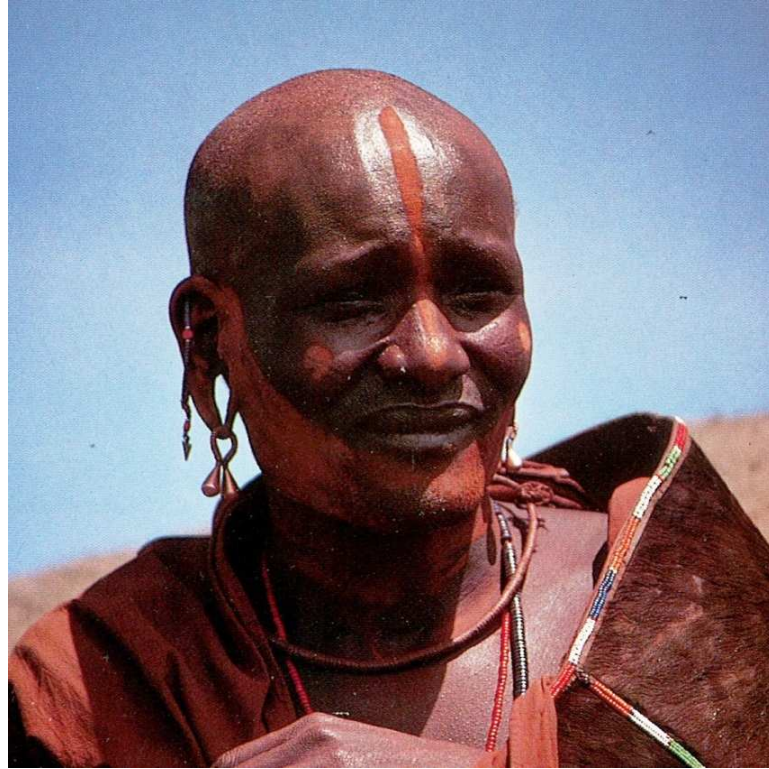


Figure 16: Maasai man with face and clothing, including a beaded cow skin, covered in red ochre. Source: Beckwith and Ole Saitoti, 1980(200).

Yeah no but maybe you can see that when Maasai where these clothes they just. Because even wearing style is a part of culture so we can say that this is a symbol because even a person who is not a Maasai came to Maasai area and where Maasai clothes they just see that this Maasai culture.

-Excerpt from Interview- Erevu, Male, Age 32

In the 21st century, the iconic symbol of the Maasai as represented by their physical appearance evokes different images. To the Maasai traditional clothing represents a very different set of symbols, which include group identity but also evokes all of the emotions and stereotypes that are embedded within the ideas of what it means to be Maasai and what it means to look like a Maasai. Public discourse in Tanzania often evokes perceptions of the Maasai as the other, an outsider who is traditional, uneducated, unclean, poor, arrogant, and backward. These perceptions and representations are

embedded in the minds of the Maasai, the international community, the nation-state, and the local people who live adjacent to Maasai.

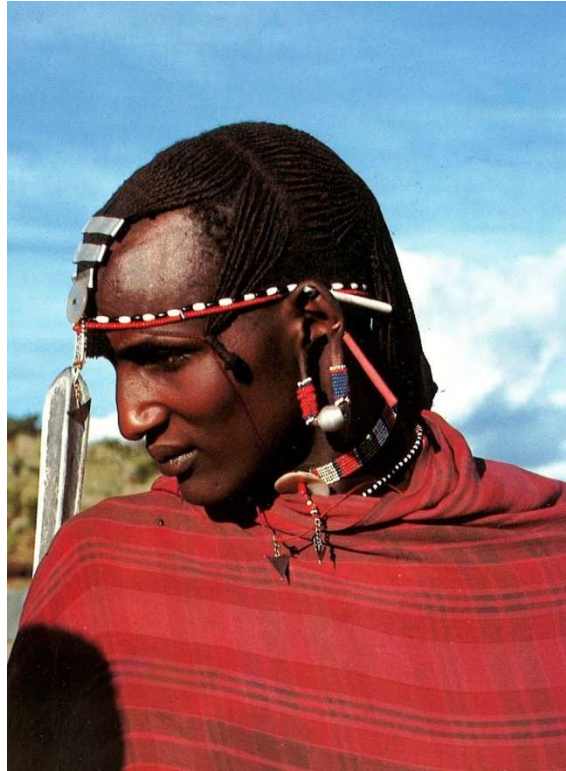


Figure 25: Maasai warrior with long hair and elaborate hairstyle. Source: Beckwith and Ole Saitoti, 1980(11).

An extreme example of the power of clothing as a marker of identity and status occurred in the late 1960s. At that time a development campaign initiated by the Tanzanian government, entitled “Operation Dress-Up” or the “Maasai Progress Plan”, stipulated regulations and policy that required Maasai not to wear their traditional clothing and to change their body care in urban and town settings. “The campaign aimed at making the Maasai abandon ‘their habit’ of smearing their bodies with red ochre and getting them to put on ‘proper dress’, which above all meant for men to wear trousers instead of the ‘traditional’ lubega, a kind of toga” (Schneider: 105). According to the Tanzanian government it was time for the Maasai to stop being relics of the past and to

join the rest of the nation in pursuing a modern, progressive, and developed lifestyle image. This translates to leave behind the old ways of dressing and body care for your own good. A number of different strategies were employed by the government to get the Maasai to wear what was considered appropriate dress including repeated public statements and appeals, the sealing of red ochre pits, the withdrawal of business license for red ochre traders, banning the wearing of traditional clothing on public transportation, in schools, bars, restaurants, and when attending national festivals, and there was a threat to deny medical care to Maasai who were dressed improperly (Schneider: 106). One could easily interpret these regulations as a coercive measure to insure social change that aligned itself with the broader society norms. In retrospect, a strategy used by a group of Maasai was to purchase one suit that was then shared by all of the men. The suit was used by all of the males whenever they wished or needed to go to town.

In the following section I will describe the Maasai traditional clothing starting with the clothing made of animal hides and the current clothing made from cloth. I describe the transition from hide to cloth clothing and its implications for the meaning of tradition. Through this change from hide to cloth clothing, which are both considered to be Maasai traditional clothing, I will illustrate how Maasai culture and traditions change, evolve, and are redefined over time and space.

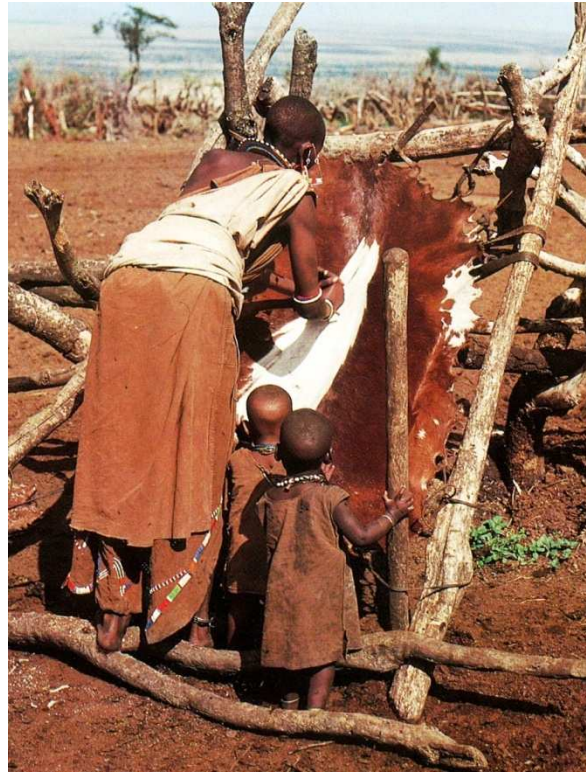


Figure 26: Maasai women with children preparing animal skin. Source: Beckwith and Ole Saitoti, 1980(218).

In the past, traditional clothing of Maasai was made from the skins of goats and sheep that they possessed. The skins are dried and processed. This means having all of the hair removed by scraping and then sewn together by the women of the household. After the skins are sewn together the women then decorate the skins with beads of various colors and metal chains with metal bangles on the ends. These beads were acquired through trade or purchased in the markets. After the skin has been decorated, a mixture of crushed red ochre and fat or oil is worked into the hide. Once completed the garment has a deep red color. In addition to being used for clothing, red ochre is a type of rock which is crushed and then mixed with fat or oil is also applied to the body and hair. Women are responsible for making the clothing and decorations for all the

members of their household. This labor intensive activity takes up most if not all, of their free time.

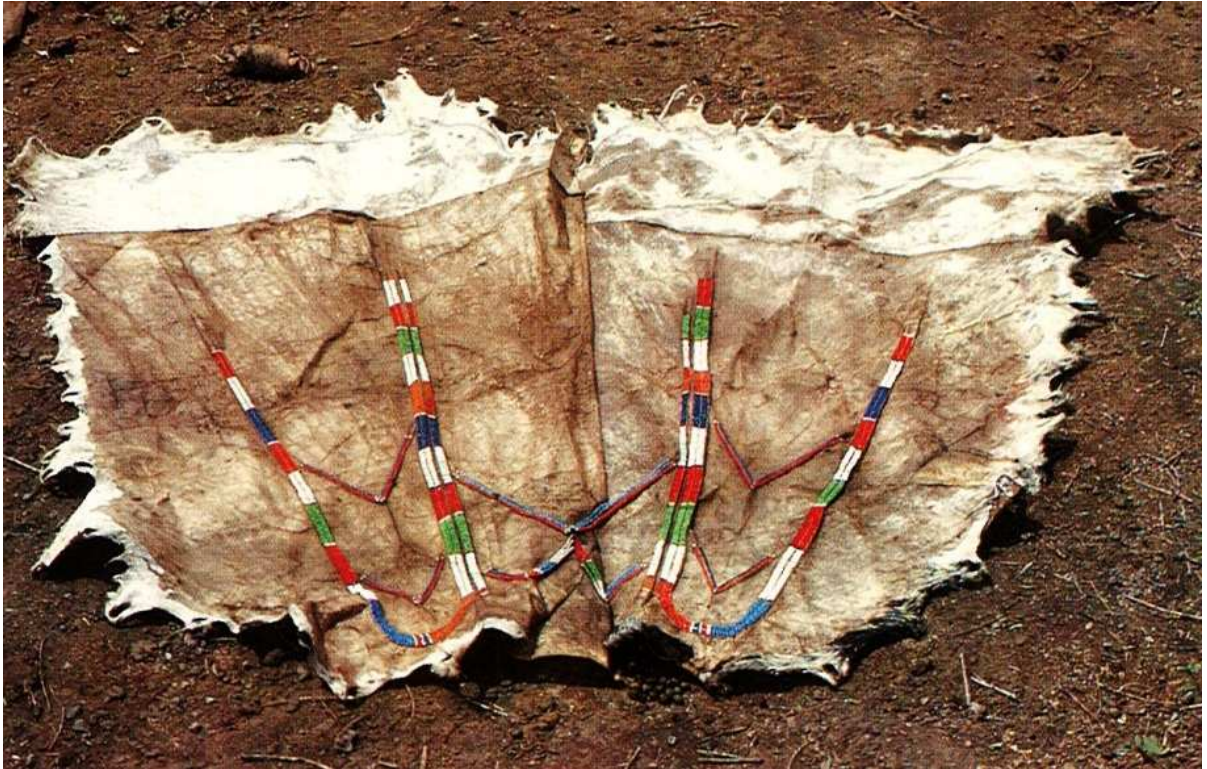


Figure 27: Example of Maasai clothing made from animal hide and decorated with beads. Source: Beckwith and Ole Saitoti, 1980(217).

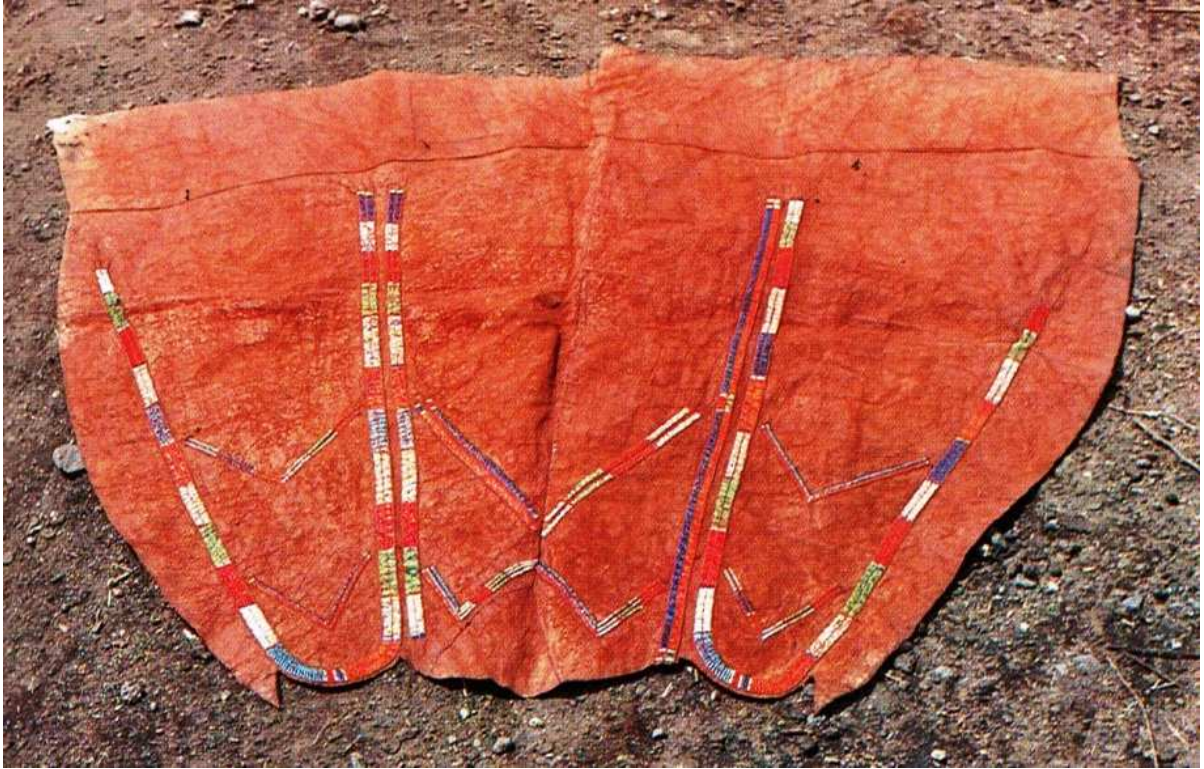


Figure 28: Example of Maasai clothing made from animal hide, covered in red ochre, and decorated with beads. Source: Beckwith and Ole Saitoti, 1980(217).

Clothing worn by the Maasai varies according to age and gender. Children, both male and female, typically wear only one piece of clothing that is tied at the right shoulder. In a variety of colors for the boys and in either blue or purple for the girls, often with a leather belt around their waist. As one matures there are gender differences in the dress. For all Maasai adults, the clothing is worn and fastened on the right shoulder leaving the left shoulder bare. Women wear two-piece garments one on top tied at the right shoulder and the other tied with a belt around the waist. The colors that women wear are either blue to red. Warriors, and younger men are called, the Morani, they wear two-piece garments, typically red in color, one tied at the right shoulder hanging loosely and tied with a belt at the waist with another piece of cloth worn around their shoulders. Older men typically wear three-piece garments of the clothing, all dark in color. The

style is similar to that of the Morani but with the addition of a large shuka or blanket. All garments are decorated with metal and beaded materials added to the cloth by the women. What ornaments an individual was allowed to or supposed to wear varied with respect to his/her place in the age-set system and stage in the lifecycle.

Typically, Morani and younger women, unmarried and recently married, are the most elaborately decorated, with clothing ornamentation diminishing as an individual ages. All Maasai have their ear lobes stretched starting at a young age and have their lower two middle incisors extracted. All Maasai males and females, both adults and young children including toddlers, also have their heads shaven. There is one exception, for males, when they are Morani, typically between the ages of 16-30, this group keeps their hair long, braided and painted with red ochre.



Figure 24: Maasai warriors with long hair and clothing dyed with red ochre dancing. Source: Amin, Willetts, and Eames, 1987(77).

The Maasai have changed from wearing hides to cloth for traditional dress. , with the introduction of cash economy and globalization. The cloth is made and imported from the Southeast Asia region and is sold at the local markets frequented by the Maasai. Some of the reasons cited by the Maasai for making the transition from hides to cloth are the cloth is already made and less labor intensive to care for and produce. Also cloth can

be easily cleaned by soap and water, an option not available with the hide clothing. This change situates the Maasai as a participant in the global economy

Today, traditional Maasai clothing is made from fabric that comes in a variety of colors, with children and men typically having more color choices than women. Infants and children up to the age of three or four will wear one piece of cloth tied at the right shoulder or western children's clothing such as shirts, pants, and skirts. Older children's clothing is one piece of fabric of any color that is secured around the waist with a belt and usually the same color as the women's, either blue or purple. Girls, once they have been circumcised and ready to be married, start to wear clothing like women. Their clothing consists of two pieces, one worn around the waist fastened with a belt and the other across the right shoulder fastened with a safety pin. Color choices for women's clothing are blue and purple, often with a white border design. In general, this fabric is heavier and sturdier than the men's clothing. The Morani and circumcised young men wear two pieces of cloth, primary red in color, one worn across the right shoulder that drapes down the body with a belt around the waist and the other piece of cloth is worn around the shoulders. Older men or elders typically wear two to three pieces of cloth usually in a darker red color, one around the waist, one across the right shoulder, and then wear a large blanket covering their bodies. Although the composition of the clothing has changed, the dress style has not.



Figure 23: Maasai warriors with decorations and dressed in contemporary Maasai clothing which is imported. Source: Allison Kotowicz, 2012.

With the transition from hides to cloth clothing, women still remain the primary decorators of the beaded adornments for men and women. Often times instead of using skin or hide from their own animals, women will buy belts in the markets and pieces of plastics which are then decorated with different types of beads and metal bangles using sewing thread purchased in the marketplace. Young men and women continue to wear the most decoration or ornaments in contrast to elders and children who will typically wear fewer ornaments on their clothing.

In addition to the material culture of dress there are also changes in the physical appearance that signify who is Maasai. In the past, older men and women have had their ear lobes stretched and their two lower middle incisors removed however, today many

younger men, women and children do not. Whereas most Maasai still shave their heads younger women, especially those who have gone to school, will sometimes grow their hair longer and wear their hair in styles similar to non-Maasai young women living in cities.

From the past until now, there have been several changes to what is considered Maasai traditional clothing. For one, the Maasai traditional clothing of the past was made from the skins of sheep and goats. Making clothing took several months of work by the women and the garment was not cleaned on a daily basis by soap and water like the cloth clothing of today. In the past, the procurement of clothing required little if any interaction with outsiders. Today, there has been shift, both in the material composition of clothing but also how it is acquired. Nowadays, Maasai traditional clothing is made of imported fabric manufactured somewhere in South East Asia, from places like Indonesia. On the edging of the cloth is printed the year and a saying in a foreign language. Instead of relying on their own animals to make their clothing, the Maasai are active participants in a cash economy associated with global products such as imported cloth used for clothing. Preparing hides for clothing is fast becoming a lost practice, and today, few Maasai women know how to make clothing from animal skins of goats and sheep. When asked about the composition of traditional Maasai clothing six interviewees did not mention animal skins. Only the three eldest interviewees (their ages are 78, 78, and 63) mentioned the wearing of animal skins. Six out of the nine interviewed only mentioned the cloth clothing that is worn today as the Maasai traditional clothing. For today's Maasai traditional clothing is the cloth that they buy in the markets using cash that they have obtained from the sale of their livestock. In the past, the Maasai acquired the goods

they needed from other tribes and traders through bartering of goods such as animal hides, milk, and other livestock products.

Another change from the past regarding Maasai traditional clothing and decorations is the use of red ochre and fat and oil in body care. Red ochre is not naturally found in the Morogoro region of Tanzania and therefore must be purchased at the market from areas in the north. Today, red ochre is rarely used in the dyeing of animal skins, clothing, hair, or other ornamentation. In the past, the Maasai used to rub fat or oil onto their bodies and hair, today, this practice has been replaced through the use of store bought lotions, oils, and soaps.

In the past, all Maasai men, women, and children would shave their heads. The Morani were the only ones with long hair. They would spend hours grooming. These activities included braiding each other's hair and dyeing it with red ochre, and adding oil and fat. Nowadays, the majority of the Morani keep their heads shaved, only a few are continuing with braids with one alteration, they now refrain from dyeing with red ochre. This decline may be in part due to the number of children attending school. Maasai children must travel to cities to receive formal education, away from their pastoral home. For older children entering secondary school, that they have a boarding school experience, this results in the young Maasai spending significant periods of time outside of the influence of adult Maasai



Figure 17: Group of Maasai children in contemporary cloth dress. Source: Allison Kotowicz, 2012.



Figure 18: Group of Maasai children in school uniforms. Source: Allison Kotowicz, 2012.



Figure 19: Maasai children in cloth dress dyed with red ochre. Source: Beckwith and Ole Saitoti, 1980(66).

One thing that has not changed about Maasai traditional clothing and dress is the wearing and production of decorations and ornaments. Whereas, this is still the primary occupation of Maasai women with their beadwork and decorations, the products of their labor are not just made and used within their families; today it is also sold to tourists and/or other people from the city. When women have free time, they will often spend it working on their beadwork surrounded by other women who live nearby or in the same boma or homestead. As in the past, most of the decorations and ornaments are worn by young men and women.



Figure 21: Grooming: Maasai women putting on red ocher. Source: Beckwith and Ole Saitoti, 1980(198).

The change from clothing made from hides to clothing to imported cloth is one example of the dynamic nature of social change within the Maasai and how change becomes accepted as the new norm. Clothing is a symbol of the Maasai identity that is dynamic and has multiple and negotiated meanings in differing settings. For example many Maasai who attend university will wear western clothing in the cities but when they return home will wear the traditional Maasai clothing. Another example would be that some of the Maasai who work in the cities as guards will often wear there Maasai traditional clothing to evoke the images and associations of the fierce Maasai warrior.

The redefining of traditional clothing from hides to imported cloth has a number of different consequences. It shows us how traditions and authenticity are constantly made and remade and that there is time and effort that goes into defining the components of

one's identity. The traditional clothing of the Maasai symbolizes a number of different things to a number of different stakeholders. For example, the Maasai traditional clothing serves as a visual representation of the ideal subsistence pattern of the culture of the cow. It is a symbol that is readily recognized by both insiders and outsiders to the cultural group. Clothing also serves as a means of identification of social status within the Maasai themselves as each age set and gender has their own particular type and style of the clothing which is supposed to be worn. In addition to symbolizing the culture of the cow lifestyle, the Maasai traditional clothing has also served as symbol to others of traditional lifestyles, uneducated people, uncleanliness, poverty, arrogance, and backwardness.

With the change from traditional hide clothing to imported cloth we see a means in which to enter into market relations through the buying and selling of imported cloth. The clothes and jewelry that are made by the Maasai are bought and sold not only by the Maasai themselves but also by tourists and other cultural outsiders. The introduction of cloth also marks a significant change in the mode and means of production. The production of clothing from hides was done by women and took a long amount of time and effort, usually several months. The hide clothing required a different set of skills to be made and maintained over time. The introduction of imported cloth meant that women no longer had to spend enormous amounts of time and effort to make traditional hide clothing. The imported cloth could be bought at the market and cleaned with soap and water.

A specific example of this contestation within Maasai traditional clothing comes from the introduction of western clothing to Maasai children. Maasai children are most

likely to be introduced to western clothing when they enter into primary school. Throughout their schooling years, children in Tanzania must purchase and wear school uniforms. These uniforms are to be worn at all times when the children are in school. For many Maasai children, they will go to school in their uniforms but when they return home they are expected to change back into the traditional Maasai clothing. With the older Maasai youth, we see that they recognize the symbolism and different meanings behind different types of clothing. For example, when young adult Maasai enter university or even when they just want to go to the city they will often wear western clothing versus the traditional Maasai clothing. Reasons stated for this change to western clothing include wanting to fit and be seen as other Tanzanians and also that the traditional Maasai clothing is impractical for city life. For the older age sets, we see that they wear the traditional Maasai clothing almost all the time whether they are at home with their cattle or in the city. For the older age-sets the traditional clothing tells everyone who is Maasai and who is not and what their relationship to a particular person should be. They see no need to change their clothing as they go from one place to another.

On the local level this means a change in the mode of production of traditional clothing. Women no longer have to spend months at time making traditional clothing out of animal hides. The new imported cloth can be easily washed and maintained using soap and water. Individuals can choose from a wide variety of colors and patterns of imported cloth at the market. Women still remain the primary producers of decorations and jewelry for the entire society. However nowadays women have the opportunity to make and sell these decorations to other Tanzanians, to tourists, and even to people half

way around the globe through the use of the internet and the creation of non-profit organizations devoted to helping women succeed in development and business. Maasai youth are no longer restricted to solely wearing the traditional Maasai clothing. They now have access to western clothing through a number of different venues including school, university, markets, and malls within the cities. The youth are making conscious choices about the type of clothing they wear, whether it is the traditional Maasai clothing or the more modern western style clothing.

On a national level, there has always been a vested interest in the appearance of the Maasai. As illustrated in the above data chapter, there was even a ban on Maasai traditional clothing in the 1960s. The national government wanted to portray an image of a developed, modern country that was ready to enter onto the worldwide stage. The Maasai traditional clothing of animal hides and decorations did not fit this image of a modern developed Tanzania in the eyes of many nationals. It in fact portrayed the exact opposite, the image of dirtiness, poverty, and backwardness. Despite this, Maasai clothing and jewelry are large tourist products and even non-Maasai individuals will make Maasai-like jewelry to sell in their shops or they will go out and buy Maasai jewelry and resell them for their own profit.

On an international level, the iconic image of the Maasai dressed in traditional clothing evokes a number of different representations and feelings. One feeling is that of authentic, traditional Africa, representing a time that has been forgotten by the rest of the world when people lived at one with nature. It also represents everything that the western world is not- poverty, uneducated, traditional, dirty, and backward. Yet the Maasai decorations and images of Maasai in traditional clothing sell for a great deal of money

and almost every tourist that comes to visit the Maasai wants to have their picture taken with them. The Maasai have begun to recognize these interests in their traditional image and lifestyle and have even asked tourists for money in order to allow them to take their picture.

For this data we can see that even within the local, national and international levels that identity and representation is not a singular, static phenomena. It consists instead of multiple perspectives that exist on a continuum and are continuously negotiated by both insiders and outsiders.

As part of the in-depth interviews, individuals were asked about the type of clothing he/she was wearing at the time of the interviews. There were a total of nine participants in the in-depth interviews analyzed in the data analysis. Of these nine participants five were female and four were male. The age of the participants ranged from 22 years old to 78 years old. Each was asked to describe if he/she considered his/her clothing to be traditional. All individuals asserted that they were indeed wearing traditional Maasai clothing. When asked if they ever wore other types of clothing such as western or Swahili clothing five individuals said they did wear other clothing styles. Swahili clothing consisting of manufactured clothing of a wax print fabric called batik, printed fabrics call kitenege, or other printed fabrics with Swahili sayings on the bottom called kanga. Many Tanzanian's will wear Swahili clothes mixed with imported western clothing. For example a Tanzanian woman will often wear a western style t-shirt with a skirt made of kanga. For the Maasai in this study Swahili clothes and western style clothes were the same thing. Only four individuals reported that they wear only Maasai clothing. The four individuals who stated that they only wear Maasai traditional clothing

were in the age range of 44-78 years. They had no formal education and only go into town if they needed to go to the hospital or to sell milk. Of the five individuals who said they also wore western or Swahili clothing, only one was female (26 years of age) and the other four individuals were males with ages of 22, 29, 32, and 63. Of these five individuals, four of them have had some formal educational experiences; three had been or were currently in college. The eldest male individual was the only one who did not attend school. The reasons the interviewees stated for going to town included school, hanging out with friends, going shopping, going to the hospital, eating in restaurants or hotels, work, or if they had a home in town.



Figure 20: Young Maasai women wearing traditional beading and the contemporary Maasai clothing made from imported cloth. Source: Allison Kotowicz, 2012.



Figure 22: Maasai women with child dressed in beaded animal skins. Source: Beckwith and Ole Saitoti, 1980(63).

Maasai often wear different clothing based on situation and environment. When asked where and when they wear each type of clothing, the most common response was a demarcation by context. They wore Maasai clothing at home and the western or Swahili clothing when they go to town, work, or school. The reasons given for wearing Maasai clothes at home was that the western and Swahili clothing felt uncomfortable and was ill suited for the village lifestyle of the Maasai. The reasons given for wearing western or Swahili clothing was context. Outside of the Maasai community they wanted to fit in or be seen like other individuals in town. When they go to town it was easier to wear this type of clothing. This opinion was primarily expressed by the younger generation of Maasai. The following quotation is an illustration of how one young man negotiates the use of western clothing and Maasai traditional clothing.

Because I have many friends which I study with them at university, at secondary school, at town there so when I wear this Maasai clothes they see me differ from them so I just like to see myself the same as them so I just wear the same clothes as they.

Excerpt from Interview- Erevu, Male, Age 32

From this data we can draw a number of conclusions. One, men seem to be more flexible in the types of clothing worn. Older men and women do not feel the need to wear western or Swahili clothing even when they go to town, whereas younger men and women are more inclined to wear western or Swahili clothing in the city. Two, education is an indicator that characterizes those individuals who responded that they wore clothing other than the traditional Maasai clothing. The educational levels reported were up to the level of college or university. Three, there is an age difference in those who did not wear western or Swahili clothing. We can see that the Maasai's use of clothing as a symbolic marker of identity is fluid. They are making conscious choices of what to wear and when to wear Maasai traditional clothing or western or Swahili clothing.

Chapter 6

Rites of Passage



Figure 29: Maasai boys preparing for circumcision ceremony. Source: Allison Kotowicz, 2012.

Rites of passage are important when examining individual and group identity. Identity is informed and defined in part by behavior. Behaviors consist of cues, signs, and symbols that are read both internally and externally to determine group membership. Each culture and society has a worldview that describes the life cycle of its members. Each stage of the life cycle is represented by a specific set of behaviors that indicates what it means to an individual at the stage of life in that particular society. Inherent are various stages of life that are noted by cultural traditions and practices that we recognize as rites of passage. They support the development of individuals to move successfully

from one phase of life to another. An example of this process from the United States can be seen in the sacraments that one goes through and receives as a member of the Catholic Church. From birth to death, Catholics are supposed to go through a series of rites of passage that the Church calls sacraments. They include baptism, the Eucharist, reconciliation, confirmation, marriage, holy orders, and anointing of the sick. These sacraments usually span a person's entire life from birth to death. Most Catholics must undergo all of the sacraments except the holy order, where one devotes their life to the service of God and the Catholic Church. Rites of passage define who is a member and who is an outsider to a particular culture. They mark the status of individuals and place in their cultural worldview. (Van Genep 1960: 1-14)

Rites of passage also hold a repository of the learning and socialization process an individual acquires as a societal member. Rite of passage mark life's stages, achieved after years of learning relevant information and behaviors necessary to move forward in the life cycle. In the African context, one can find many well developed systems of rites of passage, including among the Maasai people of East Africa. The Maasai have elaborate rites of passage that mark and individuals life from birth to death. The most important rite of passage for the Maasai is the rites of passage surrounding the transition from boy to man and girl to woman.

This chapter examines the significance of identity for the Maasai as it is understood through behaviors associated with rites of passage rituals and practices. Analysis of the life cycle of the Maasai, will explain the roles and responsibilities that are inherent in each stage of the life cycle and the subsequent rites of passage that are

involved at each life stage as an individual moves from birth to death in Maasai society. Particular attention will be paid to the circumcision rites of passage for boys and girls, in the past and in the present. This chapter concludes with an examination of the changes to circumcision rituals and discusses the effects of globalization and modernity on the rites of passage as well as the relevancy to today's Maasai groupings. The rite of circumcision is an important cornerstone for Maasai identity and culture. This chapter examines the importance of this ritual to the Maasai identity. The chapter concludes with an examination of social change and how it affects this rite of passage and Maasai identity in the 21st century.

Maasai Rites of Passage—Life cycle



Figure 30: Maasai warriors walking around cattle kraal at male circumcision ceremony. Source: Allison Kotowicz, 2012.

The Maasai culture is infused with rites of passage in almost every aspect of life. Rites of passage include birth, acquiring your name, childhood, adolescence, for non-married individuals, for married individuals, elders, warriors, men, and women. The three rites of passage that all Maasai must go through according to my interviewees are the birth of a baby, marriage, and circumcision. These rites of passage serve to incorporate individuals as fully fledged adults in the Maasai community with all of the rights and responsibilities that go with adulthood. By far the most important rites of passage for the Maasai are those associated with the transition from childhood to adulthood. This ceremony occurs across both genders, and the of rituals share commonalities. As a Maasai individual passes through several stages in his/her life cycle. Each stage is accompanied with a set of roles and responsibilities that must be mastered before moving from one stage to the next. These roles and responsibilities are part of a learning process, a socialization process which informs the individual what it means to be a Maasai at each stage of life. Young boys and girls, laioni and endito in Maasai, will learn their responsibilities often as play that mimics work behavior and practice. Girls will copy the behaviors of their mothers, aunts, grandmothers, and older sisters. Boys will try copy the behaviors of their fathers, uncles, grandfathers, and brothers. By watching and mimicking the behavior of their elders, children gain the necessary and appropriate knowledge that is expected of them at each stage of their life. For example, through this process of learning children learn the appropriate greetings for each member of their family and other members of the Maasai community as well as their relationship to other individuals. For example children, both boys and girls, and all

adult women must bow their head to anyone older than them. While he/she is in the bowed position the elder who is either male or female places his/her hand on their heads and bestow the appropriate greeting and blessing. As a child ages, he/she is given more roles and responsibilities. For example older boys are given the responsibility of taking care of the cattle and other livestock out to finding places to graze. Older girls are given instruction concerning the domestic sphere and their work focuses on taking to take care of the house and younger children. Older boys will start off supervising the grazing of small livestock groups or calves and slowly progress until they are responsible for the whole herd. At a young age small girls are taught how to sweep the house, cook, and help in the cleaning process. They are often instructed to look after smaller children while their mothers are busy completing other chores.

Once a child has reached the appropriate age and has mastered the roles and responsibilities for young children, he/she are prepared for the rite of circumcision. The appropriate age is determined in part by age and by the demand of the individual children who tell their parents that they are ready for the ritual. Every ten to fifteen years a new age-set is opening, allowing for all the boys of a certain age to be circumcised within a certain period of time. After the elders open up the circumcision period it will last for a few months and then all circumcisions for boys will stop until another age set is opened. For girls the ideal age for circumcision is when puberty occurs, meaning they start their menstruation. For boys the ideal age of circumcision is approximately 16 or 17. The circumcision ritual marks the passage from childhood to adulthood in Maasai society. Once an individual is circumcised, they are recognized as full adult members of the Maasai community with all of the roles and responsibilities that this entails. For girls,

after circumcision they are prepared for marriage. A girl must have learned and mastered all of the jobs and responsibilities that will allow her to be successful in her new role as wife and mother such as being able to fetch water, cooking, cleaning, looking after children, milking the cattle, and taking care of livestock. For boys, after circumcision they enter a period of warriorhood in which they will be called Moran. This period of time typically lasts anywhere from 10-15 years. During this period of time the Moran will spend most of their time with members of their own age-set eating, working, playing and sleeping in the same room. They are almost inseparable from each other. During this time life-long bonds of friendship and brotherhood are formed and nurtured. Their responsibilities are to protect the family and take care of the cattle and other livestock. For boys to be circumcised they must demonstrate that they are ready to take on the roles and responsibilities of the warriors, that means defending the Maasai community and looking after and taking care of the livestock. Looking after the livestock includes making sure that all of the animals are accounted for and that none get lost. It includes taking care and making sure that the animals have everything they need to be healthy, such as medicine, food, water, and a secure place to stay at night. Once a young man has finished his period as a Morani, he will go through another ceremony, called Eunoto. This ceremony marks the transition from being a warrior to becoming an elder. The current warriors pass on their roles and responsibilities to the next generation of warriors as they move forward in the age-set. When completed he then becomes an elder within Maasai society. Once they are elders, males marry and start families of their own. They will assume an advisory role in Maasai society, they are looked upon as individuals who are valued for their advice and wisdom. Once both genders reach old age, their roles and

responsibilities within the community are greatly diminished. They may help look after the boma and offer advice to the younger generations but they have no work requirements, unlike adult men and women who bear most of the responsibility and work within the Maasai society.

Age Set System

The age-set systems provides the Maasai with a way of organizing their history and there society. Through the age-set each member of society is defined throughout his/her lifecycle and taught the appropriate roles and responsibilities at each stage of the age-set system. This in turn helps maintain the culture of the cow by providing the social structure necessary for pastoralism and Maasai culture of the cow to survive. For example, young boys are responsible for identifying grazing land for the herd while the warriors are responsible for protecting the herd and society. In the past the warriors would raid neighboring tribes or villages in order to obtain more cattle, but this practice all but disappeared today.

Today there are living members of five age-sets. From oldest to youngest they are: kidotu, mildoti, elderato, kisoni, and korianga. Today, in 2012 the warriors in the society are members of the korianga age-set. There is an approximate age difference of ten to fifteen years between age-sets. Each age-set is given their own name which refers to members of that particular age-set. An individual will often be referred to by others by his age-set name. Each age-set name will also become associated with particular cultural and historic events that happened as a way of remembering the Maasai history.

Social Structure

The age-set system is different for males and females. The Maasai are a tribe that divided the men into age-sets or age-grades. The age system is probably the most characteristic features of Maasai social organization and involves a ritual cycle that occurs approximately every ten to fifteen years (Spencer: 15). “This imposes a cultural construction on the natural process of aging, providing a constant backdrop to people’s experience of time and punctuating their awareness that the life-course is ticking away” (Spencer: 15). The foundation of this system is found in the circumcision of boys. The age-sets permeate all aspects of Maasai life, it shapes the way that men and women interact with each other and with third parties (Spencer: 15). The age system unites all Maasai regardless of national borders or barriers. It provides the Maasai with a way to organize time and history among their people. Each age-set is named and is associated with particular historical events. Time is reckoned by age-sets not in years. “It provides both men and women with a culturally defined sense of time, structuring the life-course within an endless stream of ageing age-sets that link with oral traditions of the past” (Spencer: 37). It bonds men together and creates a sense of unity and shared destiny (Spencer: 15). Females do not have age sets like their husbands but their social position is defined by the age-set of their fathers and husbands. “The age-set of a Maasai woman is defined by her relationships to the males in her life. As a young girl she may be identified with her morani lovers. Once she is ready to be married she may be identified with age-set of her father. After she is married she becomes part of her husband’s age-set. And once she becomes a mother who has sons who are warriors she is identified as a ‘manyata mother’ (Spencer: 35).

Circumcision marks a definitive transition in the social status of boys and girls. After circumcision, boys become Morani, or warriors, which are subdivided into junior warriors and senior warriors. After a period of time lasting anywhere from 5-15 years warriors then become elders. This social grouping is subdivided into junior elders or senior elders. After a girl is circumcised she will often get married right away and begin to have children. After the birth of her first child she is considered to be full Maasai women. It is possible for a Maasai woman to have children before she is married, either with the Morani or with the elders. Each family deals with this situation in their own way but typically if this happens and the girl is not married she will stay at home with her mother and father until they can marry. In some cases the marriage is between the woman and the father of the child in some cases it is not.

Within the age-set system there are particular festivals and rituals associated with different phases of the life cycle. These include rituals and festivals associated with birth, marriage, and circumcision. At almost every ritual the community gathers around food and drinks to celebrate and mark the passage of time in an individual's lifecycle. The rituals and festivals associated with the age-system publicly mark transitional periods of change. They unite whole communities and generate a wide sense of Maasai identity and unity.

“This process is entwined with the life-courses of individuals. For those directly involved, it *is* their life. For others – men and women – it reflects a shift in the configuration of relations and the ebb and flow of power with age. The significance for them is that the ceremony *has* taken place” (Spencer: 39).

Changes to the age set system

The age-set system of the Maasai in many ways has not changed over the years. The system still moves in intervals of every ten to fifteen years with a new age set being named and the age set above them being retired, but there have also been changes to the age-set system. The changes most frequently mentioned by the interviewees was a decline in the age-set system in general, evidence by the lack of respect for Maasai culture and traditions, to other Maasai especially elders, and for a person's responsibilities. The younger generation does seem not listen to the elders as much or to value their opinion. Some no longer keep the traditional Maasai culture and would instead prefer to be in the villages or in town with their friends playing pool and talking.

...they can see that this coming age groups are not they doesn't know all about culture and they don't have the respect of that of the past groups had so it's more like they are more free and don't know their responsibilities.

-Excerpt from Interview- Mhina, Female, Age 45

Other changes to the age-set system include the erosion and forgetting of Maasai culture and beliefs, even for the elders of the community.

So yeah he said that there has been some changes you know the main changes are many of the older people now are just forgetting their culture and the sense of this globalization and our culture being destroyed many old Maasai are forgetting their culture and everything and so the kidotu and mildotu now the oldest just a few of them now can still remember their culture and his age group you know few of them are still remember because many of them are having you know destroyed by the alcohol and stuff and so now the main thing is like people forgetting their culture, traditions and things.

-Excerpt from Interview- Zuberi, Male, Age 63

Defining Rites of Passage

Rites of passage mark the transition from one phase of life to another. Rites of passage can involve birth, death, puberty, marriage, childhood, parenthood, religious societies, or pregnancy (Van Gennep: 3). They help individuals move successfully from

one stage of life to another. They also undergird the transmission of culture, the socialization process of the individual into the group and help define an individual's personal and group identity. Rites of passage help define who is who in a culture and mark the boundaries of membership and non-member to the group or society. Rites of passage can occur on an individual basis or in groups. Typically there are three stages that occur in a rite of passage. The first stage is the pre-liminal stage. The pre-liminal stage typically involves some rite of separation where the initiates are separated from the overall group and placed into seclusion for a time (Van Gennep: 11). This stage involves the education and socialization process, here an individual learns all that they need to know to succeed successfully in the next stage of life. The second stage is the liminal stage which involves rites of transition (Van Gennep: 11). This is often when the actual ceremony or transition from one phase of life to another occurs. In this stage the individual is placed into a non-definitive category and is perceived to be in between phases. They are in the middle and are working towards moving into the next phase. The final stage is the post-liminal stage which involves the reincorporation of the individual or group back into the masses of society (Van Gennep: 11). After the post-liminal stage the individual has successfully completed the rite of passage and is now in a new phase of life.

Initiation Rites

Initiation rites typically fall under the category of puberty rites or rites that accompany the transition from childhood to adulthood. When scholars speak of puberty there are essentially two kinds: physical and social. These two phenomena do not necessarily occur simultaneously. , according to Van Gennep, many scholars have

mistakenly believed that initiation rites coincide with physical puberty and sexual maturity. Physical and social puberty need not coincide when speaking of rites of passages. Nor do the initiates need to be sexually mature to undergo initiation rites. The exact time of physical maturity is hard to pinpoint in boys and girls since individuals mature at different rates (Van Gennep: 67-68). A typical example of an initiation rite that is common all over Africa is that of circumcision of boys and girls which is practiced by the Maasai people as a rite of passage from childhood and adulthood. Initiation rites that involve the passage from childhood to adulthood typically involve the education of the initiates in the social and collective life of the people (Mensah: 88). These rites also involve feasts and tests which can contain the following elements: segregation, retreat, life in common, education, purification rituals, tests of courage and physical endurance, mutilations, song, dance, and circumcision (Mensah: 89-90).

Circumcision Ritual-Historical Description



Figure 31: The boys are walked through the cattle kraal by their male relatives where they will be circumcised individually on a piece of cow hide in the center of the cattle kraal. Source: Allison Kotowicz, 2012.

In this section of the paper I will give a historical description of the circumcision ritual for both males and females as it was practiced. This section provides the reader with a base line through which to mark changes in the circumcision ritual through time and space. I will first start with a description of the male ceremony followed by a description of the female ceremony.

Male ceremony

The rites of passage that Maasai boys experience to become men is a road filled with pain and hardship, and adventure, excitement. For many males it is recalled as the best experiences of their lives. There are two main ceremonies that Maasai boys must

undergo in order to become men in the community. The first is circumcision where the foreskin of the penis is removed. Once the elders open up the circumcision period for the next age set it is then the parent's decision when to circumcise their son. The son is expected to perform acts of bravery such as defending a herd of cattle from lions in order to prove to his parents that he is ready to be circumcised and become a warrior in the society. The circumcision ceremony for boys is usually undergone as group composed of boys from the same family. The time for all of the boys to be circumcised is a decision that the elders and the medicine men make (Hollis: 294). They decide when to open the period of circumcision in which families and communities are allowed to circumcise young boys and they also dictate when the period of circumcision is closed and no more boys can be circumcised until the next opening. After the elders have opened the circumcision time period the boys and their families begin preparation for the ceremony. The boys will spend their time painting their bodies with chalk and going to different bomas during the next two to three months after which they will return to their homes (Hollis: 26). The chalk announces the boy's status to the community and symbolizes that the boy is ready to be circumcised. They travel from boma to boma to support their fellow age-mates as they undergo the circumcision ceremony. The boys are responsible for collecting wax for arrows, ostrich feathers for a crown, honey to make beer for the elders, and other articles that are used in the circumcision (Saitoti: 1). A few days before the actual circumcisions takes place, the boy's head is shaved, his pubic hair is shaved, and he discards all of the items that he acquired during childhood (Saitoti: 1). During this time the boys are expected to leave their childhood and childish things behind in the past. "You must put all the sins you have committed during childhood behind and embark as a

new person with a different outlook on a new life” (Saitoti: 1). the boy is then given the knives to be used during circumcision by the individual who will be doing the cutting, typically an elder male from the Dorobo tribe. His job is to sharpen the knives and protect them from becoming blunt which would affect the effectiveness of the blade during the actual circumcision (Saitoti: 1). Before the circumcision takes place the boy is taunted by his relatives, his friends, and the warriors of the community in order to psych the boy up and encourage him to be brave (Saitoti: 1). A day before the cutting ceremony, the boys must go out to collect a tree called El-latim which is then carried and planted by the girls near the doors of the boy’s homes who will be circumcised soon (Hollis: 297). During this time period the community and the families of the boys play numerous roles. It is the responsibility of the family to set a date and time for when the circumcision ceremony will take place and to send out word to the community to come and celebrate the ceremony. Food and drinks must be prepared and procured. The elder males will instruct the young boys on what is expected and what will happen before, during, and after the ceremony. The current Morani will typically tease the younger boys that they will not be brave enough for the ceremony that they will flinch or cry out.

The details of male circumcision ceremony are typically managed by a group of elder males who are usually relatives to the boys who are to be circumcised. They are responsible for the details of the ceremony and the instruction to the boys who will be circumcised. They will escort the boy to where he is to be cut, usually in the middle of the cattle kraal. They will help hold the boy down as he is cut, serve as witnesses to the ceremony, and then escort the boys to a hut to recover. Before the circumcision takes place girls will spend a number of days in the forest with the Morani singing, dancing,

and eating meat. They will enter the boma where the circumcision is taking place together. If a boy moves at all during the circumcision, he will be regarded as incompetent, and unworthy to be a Maasai man (Saitoti: 1). The boy will bring shame not only on himself but also on his family. Struggle is futile since he is held down by the men of his family and the person performing the circumcision anyway. Just before the circumcision is to take place the boys undress, are washed with cold water and told to sit down on a piece of cowhide (Saitoti: 2). These are gender specific rites and females are not allowed to watch the actual circumcision of the boys. The boy is circumcised usually by an older male, often of the Dorobo tribe (Hollis: 297). After the circumcision the boys are placed in seclusion to heal and the rest of the community holds a large celebration where cattle are slaughtered and there is much drinking of beer. If the boy does not flinch he is praised for his courage and is now considered a warrior. After the boy has healed from the operation his hair is shaved again, that hair is allowed to grow long, and remains until his time as a warrior is complete. After the ceremony the whole community joins in singing and dancing to celebrate the accomplishment of the boys.

Yeah they close the time for the morani to be Moran to move on to be older people wazee and so to welcome this or to make this be really Moran like they are Moran but they will have a ceremony in the whole country to make them from like nowadays this is the name that we are giving this age group like as korianga and from now on they are legally morani because always there is a fight of how like trying to take over so there is a time they make it legal so they like you know be Moran and also the fourth one is small like that one but this is when the other one of the age groups is moving to entrust this age group to the next group which is coming so they are moving up and they do a ceremony to like leave this behind to leave this age group to be ready to move on.

-Excerpt from interview- Zuberi, Male, Age 63

Circumcision rituals are a time of great excitement for young boys because after they are circumcised they become part of the warrior class called Morani. For the next

five to fifteen years as warriors they, create bonds of lifelong friendship, participate in lion hunts, cattle raids, and protect the Maasai people and their cattle. They will be praised and looked upon with pride by the whole community. They will live in small manyatas outside of the village with their mothers and uncircumcised females. These manyata's are small bomas created by the mothers of the circumcised boys and the uncircumcised females. The houses are made in the same fashion as the other homes with a wooden frame plastered with cow dung and mud. During this time period the boys will rest and recover. As warriors the young Morani were expected to abide by strict taboos such as no eating inside of the home, always eating with members of his age-set, and he is not allowed to cook his own food. Accompanying rituals include naming and succession. During the ceremony of Il-Eunoto, the boys that have been circumcised are given the formal name of their age-set. The morani of today's current age set are called Korianga. Each age-set typically has two names, the formal name given to them by the elders and a more derogatory name that is used to tease them by members of other age-sets. This name will stay with them for the rest of their lives. As one group of young men become Morani another group will exit and become elders. Also during this ceremony the time for circumcisions is closed and those men who were Morani before the ceremony will now graduate to become elders in the community. At this stage they will be allowed to marry and raise a family of their own. This ceremony typically occurs after the young men have spent approximately ten to fifteen years as warriors. The time and location of the ceremony is decided by the elder males in the society.

So yeah the third one mainly its call il-enuto that it gatherers all the same age group people and like maybe it would divide the whole country into two equal sides and one side continue maybe like a couple of regions would gather together and other regions would gather together and like so all of them gather and they have to kill the biggest cow

and they go to some big bomas like one of them so they all sit down and when they have to be leaded by older people and they will be given advice and all the lessons and that's like what would be their responsibilities and as they moving from one stage to another so as becoming I don't know like morani or whatever so that's the main thing that they do.

-Excerpt from Interview- Zuberi, Male, Age 63

During this time a new group of elders will choose a leader from among the individuals in their age-set. Each age-set has their own leader. This leader is selected by members of that age-set. "...they choose a man whose parents are still living, who owns cattle and has never killed anybody, whose parents are not blind, and he himself has not a discoloured eye" (Hollis 1904: 299). The age-set secretly decides on a leader because if the individual knows is fate than he would try to run away because of the responsibility involved. Once he is chosen he will be treated as an old man by members of his age-set. This leader will be responsible for the members of his age-set. Before the Morani officially become elders, they receive instruction from other elders in the community. Elders in the community will lead the ceremony and the younger individuals will be taught and given lessons about their responsibilities in each of their age-sets and stages of life. This is often a period of mixed feelings, sadness that their time as warriors has come to an end but also a time of excitement and hope as they begin their own families.

Female ceremony

In many ways the circumcision ceremony for girls is the same as the circumcision for boys, but there are important differences. "Unlike the boys' rite, which ushers in a lengthy period of freedom and adventure, the girls' ritual leads to an arranged marriage, separation from family and friends, and subjugation to a husband's authority" (Ray: 66). The ceremony for girls is usually not as elaborate or as public as the male ceremony. Like the male ceremonies where only other males are allowed to watch the circumcision

of the boy, only females are allowed to watch the circumcision of the girl. The older women of the boma are responsible for all of the details surrounding the ceremony.

While boys look forward to their circumcision, for girls it is a time of fear and apprehension, thinking about the pain both physically and emotionally (Ray: 66).

Despite these fears, girls spend years preparing elaborate beaded accessories for the ceremony (Ray: 67).

Before the ceremony the girls and the other females in their family are unhappy and sad because of the cutting. They know there will be much blood. Despite this fear the girl must appear to be happy because she is told that if she does not appear happy that everyone who has come to celebrate the ceremony will leave. Before the actual cutting takes place the girls will spend a number of days in the forest with the Morani singing, dancing, and eating meat.

Now circumcision and then they put some alcohol first making alcohol in the circumcision and they have to announce the whole area that we will having the circumcision ceremony and the Moran will go with Those ladies that are going to be circumcised and those Moran and special ladies they go to another far place to stay for a couple of time and after the date come they call all the people and also the Moran come with the ladies and then when the morani come with those ladies so the mothers go and take those ladies from the Moran those who are going to circumcised and then they take them and putting them carrying them and they bring them home. So the next tomorrow they also they dance and eat and they have those you know there is stick they are putting there that tree they are putting close to the house and dancing that way.

They only go to celebrate there for a couple of days it is like it's like going to say bye for those girls so they will be dancing and each family will be go out because they only need to be out of that family which is doing the celebration yeah but they can go and dance to say goodbye but the day before because they know that when they come back those ladies will not belong to them again they will be a part of the mothers.

They will never sit again with the Moran from that day because they will be called then the woman and be prepared for marriage

-Excerpt from Interview- Rahma+Nia, Females, Age 79

This time in the forest is a time to celebrate and be happy but also a time for the Morani to say good bye to the girls because after they are circumcised they will become part of the mamas and they will no longer be able to dance, sing, and play with these girls after they are healed from the ceremony. After their time in the forest the Morani will escort the girls to their homes. At home, the mother will go to retrieve her daughter that is to be circumcised. The young girls will take sticks and try to beat their mothers and try to prevent them from being taken to be cut. Eventually the mothers succeed in carrying the girls to the inside of their home.

The girl's circumcision will take place inside the house usually by an elder woman who has been instructed in how to cut the girls using a razor blade. Unlike the boys, girls are allowed to cry or flinch during the ceremony, but they are encouraged not to so as to bring honor to themselves and their family. The circumcision for females typically involves the removal of the clitoris and often times the removal of the inner or outer vaginal lips (Ray: 67). After the actual cutting takes place the girl is taken in to her mother's house where she is allowed to recover and rest until she is healed. The young girls stay inside the home, drinking and washing with mafuta or oil and placing special medicine on the cut areas. After the circumcision they will also go to spend time in the forest with the Morani one last time and then return home where they are bathed and given new clothes to wear. After she has healed and returned from the forest, this signals that she is mature and is to be married. After circumcision, women are allowed to marry and have children, which will increase their status and position in Maasai society (Ray: 67).

Marriages are typically arranged by the girl's parents. If a man wishes to marry a particular girl he will send his father or other male relatives to the home of the girl to express his desire to marry. After an offer of marriage has been put forth by the prospective groom, all of the male relatives of the girls will gather. They will discuss the merits of the match, the reputation of the boy and his family, and if it is agreed that the match is good they will then discuss the appropriate bride price. The amount for the bride price is then given to the suitor who will have to procure the appropriate number of cows set by the girl's family. The bride price can be paid all at once or it can be paid over time. After bride price negotiations are completed the women of the family begin to prepare the feast and necessary decoration and garments for the girl's marriage ceremony. The day of the marriage is a sad day, the girl spends most of her time in a room in her mother's house crying and hiding her face from the guests. She is sad because now she must leave her childhood home to go away to live in a strange place with her husband and his family. The groom arrives with his family and usually a best man to escort the girl from her home to his home. Men and women gather in separate rooms where the older men and women give advice to the new couple and instruct them on the duties of marriage and how to behave towards each other. After this ritual the girl is washed and dressed by the other females present and escorted outside to the waiting groom. At this time all of the women are crying at the loss of their daughter. After the marriage ceremony, the girl will depart from her family and friends to move to her husband's home and begin a new stage in her life.

Circumcision Ritual-Present Description

In this section of the paper I will give a description of the present day circumcision ritual for both males and females. This section will help illustrate the changes that have occurred from the past to present in the circumcision ritual. It begins by giving a current description of the male ceremony, and then the female ceremony.

Male ceremony

The circumcision ceremony for the boys has essentially remained the same over the years expect for a few changes. First, the ceremony has been shorten to only two to three days. Also the boys are being cut at younger ages instead of waiting until the age of 15 or 16 to be circumcised. The day before the cutting is to take place, guests start to arrive and food is prepared so that it will be ready to be served later in the day. Also at this time the elders take the boys aside who are to be circumcised and tell you that tomorrow you will be circumcised and become Morani. You must be strong and leave behind the things of your childhood because after you are circumcised you will become the warriors in society and people will depend on you.

But this of circumcision for one stage to another maybe from lioni to go to morani or for the lady to go from a lady to go to the stage of being married for his side he know because he himself was involved in that ceremony. He said that the first day you come and people came with you the elders came with you and they talk to encourage you that tomorrow you are going to be circumcised and you're going to be another stage of you're going to be morani so you must leave these things these small things which are not good maybe playing to make yourself be fear so you are going to be strong be morani and maybe society can go to turn depend on you and you are going to be the one the warrior in the society and things so the elders came to encourage you and support you tomorrow you are going to be circumcised and after circumcised you are going to be a man cause when you are a lioni people ignore you this is not a man but when you go to another stage you are going to be morani so the second day that of circumcision he drink mafuta they come with some medicine traditional medicine they maybe you can put yourself like oil and things like that even to the head so they come to you something which you put in your head around this place and you spend maybe 2 months when you are in that time so any people come to see you they know that that boy has been

circumcised and have made a ceremony to him in order so he wear those things after 2 months they remove that and you know going to wash your body at the place where the elders prepare after that it means you have already passed from one stage to another.

-Excerpt from Interview- Sefu, Male, Age 20

The next morning the boys are taken out of their mothers' homes where they will bath in cold water. The boys will then line up and walk from one of the cattle kraal to the middle of the kraal. The boy is escorted by his male relatives. The boy is asked to sit on a cow hide that has been prepared for this ceremony. Then male family members will create a circle around the boy shielding him from the view of guests. The cutting of the foreskin will then take place. After the cutting, the boy is covered in blankets and cloth by his relatives so he remains unseen and walked backwards through the cattle kraal and taken inside to rest. Inside he is given mafuta or oil to drink which is said to help speed he healing process.

Once all of the boys have been cut, a select group of Morani, dressed in dark colors such as black, will move ceremoniously move in a straight line from one end of the cattle kraal to the other in a circular motion ended at the other end of the kraal in a semi-circle. At this time the Morani will begin to sing and dance and will then be joined by the other Morani and young girls dancing and singing. While the Morani and Enditos or young girls are singing and dancing the older women will sing and dance at the door of the household where the newly circumcised boys are resting. This house is reserved especially for the new initiates to sleep and rest as they heal. They will take turns dancing and singing in a circle in front of the boys elder male relatives concluding with jumping on the males feet and the males then retreat to the inside of the hut.

Both before and after the circumcision boys are dressed in black to signify their new status. After the ceremony, boys will decorate themselves with charcoal, white chalk, and wear ostrich feathers. After about two months the boys will be allowed to wash, at that point they then paint themselves with red ochre. After this period of about one to two months the ceremony of Il-Eunoto will take place.

Il-eunoto is all those guys in that same gender they just go to the one kraal or one boma with a huge ceremony but all the elders they go there and they just fold? Their lips and some milk and just spit them it's a kind of blessing them and if anybody doing some incantations there they stop him if we got some long fight with the boy there you forgive and then the main thing that you are doing there is just to give them their right to be the warriors of the society so that is the main things they are doing there to bless the boys to become warriors and those who were morani on that period they become retired yeah so for us it is just 5 years and then we are going to retire and then we give to other boys who are coming nowadays we just still with 5 years now

-Excerpt Interview- Fumo, Male, Age 30

At this ceremony the boys that have been circumcised will officially become Morani and their new age-set will be given a name. The Morani will be instructed by the elders as to their new duties and responsibilities as warriors of the society. The elders also bless the new age-set by drinking milk and spraying it onto the boy's heads. The Il-Eunoto ceremony is also when the elder Morani retire and everyone moves up the hierarchy of the age-set system. Just as before, the elder Morani who are about to retire are instructed by their elders as to the new roles and responsibilities of their new position as elders. They will now become responsible for learning and conducting the ceremonies and instructing the younger generations as their fathers and grandfathers have done for them.

Female ceremony

Nowadays the female circumcision has several variants. First, the circumcision ceremony is held as it was in the past, only it has been shorten to two to three days.

But on the circumcision ceremony it is difference because there are people coming also two days before. Also the lady are not allowed to be maybe the lady who is going to be circumcised he is not to be allowed to be on that family but she is taken to the neighbor family and stay there maybe after all preparation to be done. So when the day of being circumcised, they lady are coming on the evening with the morani and with other ladies and they come there they stayed maybe far away from there and mamas are going there and taking the lady who is going to be circumcised tomorrow. So they take her inside and they are starting to remove some of the decoration and she go there back to the morani and she is also dancing until maybe the middle of the night so tomorrow morning the lady have to be circumcised tomorrow morning so it is depend on the family because here we have clans. So if we belongs to a certain clan some of them are circumcising boys at the evening and others are at the morning so it depend on that ceremony maybe which clan those people are depending on. So after that the people will dance on the second day, on the third day people will disappear. So the ladies who are circumcised are starting to wear the black clothes or the lioni who are circumcised they have to wear the black clothes. On the previous time they are wearing the what the ngozi but nowadays some of them are wearing the clothes which is black and they will be around sometime living at the house or maybe in nine or eight and they go to the forest and they stay there and they come maybe in lunch time they eat they go there again to the forest maybe until the time the will be okay or maybe they are recovered for their bodies.

-Excerpt from Interview- Tawa, Female, Age 27

The ceremony may also be held in conjunction with the circumcision of boys.

Another variation in the circumcision ceremony is that many of circumcision of females is often done in secret or at a very young age. This is due to the law banning circumcision in Tanzania. Because of this law many girls today are being circumcised at younger ages, some as young as two to three years old. No matter if the girl is young or old the ceremony is usually held in private and the families are secretively for fear of being caught by the police. Some Maasai are even choosing not to circumcise girls to avoid these possible consequences.

So if now you have to circumcise a lady, sometime some of them are bleeding and some of them are dying. So if she is bleeding and you take her to the hospital the government will take arrest? From you maybe they will jail you maybe the parents or the one who is

taking care of the lady so now it is good for the people, it is good for the people to leave that one and participating on the ceremony and not cutting the lady on that.

-Excerpt from Interview- Tawa, Female, Age 27

Changes to the Circumcision Ritual

The Maasai ceremony of circumcision has been affected by a number of external forces including: globalization, modernization, education, and religious influences. As the world becomes more global and modern the Maasai are being introduced to new and different ideas that are often in conflict with traditional Maasai culture.

Firstly, there are fewer elders who know the meaning of the ceremonies or how the ceremonies are to be performed. The importance of every aspect of the ritual is no longer taken seriously or deemed to be important by many members of Maasai society, both young and old.

Yeah so now it has been just a number like a few numbers of elders like they have to find them but before it was every old man knows exactly all the traditional what's supposed to be done and now they have to the few that knows and to help get them done.

-Excerpt from Interview- Zuberi, Male, Age 63

In general, the circumcision ceremonies of both males and females have been shortened from a period of two to three months to a period of two to three days. These changes are largely due in part to education and to the increasing influence of Christianity. The ceremonies have become simpler, less elaborate. Certain rites have all but disappeared such as the planting of trees near the doorway or the brewing and drinking of alcohol.

So they say actually it is only those things that have changed because the other things like more religious that we are putting now things simple because of having this kind of believing that we don't need to put many things believing for example even the tree that

we put on the house doesn't have any meaning nowadays but we just putting because its traditional but actually those times it is something like local something like believing but nowadays we don't believe that so they say we time to change so other families they don't have those kind of tree

-Excerpt from Interview- Rahma+Nia, Females, Age 79

From colonial times to the present, governments have tried to manipulate and even outlaw the warrior hood period. These efforts have met with little success and much resistance by the Maasai community, particularly the warriors. During the time of warrior hood, young men are given a lot of freedom and are allowed to acquire cattle for their own herds through cattle raids. Their lifestyle is typically care-free associated with cattle raids, wooing uncircumcised girls, and going on lion hunts. Efforts have also been made to introduce western medicine and healthcare professionals in the circumcision ceremony, but this measure has had limited success although the use of painkillers is becoming more prevalent. Most families prefer to have their sons traditionally circumcised regardless of the risks (Mboera, et.al). Reasons given for preferring traditional circumcision include observing cultural norms and values, initiation into manhood, it is a sign of a warrior, convenient, and an increase in sexual pleasure during lovemaking (Mboera, et. al.: 42).

According to one male interviewee, the Morani today are less strong than previous Morani. In the past the Morani used to be more involved with the community providing security and even going to war if necessary to protect the people and the livestock. They would spend much of their time in forest drinking special soup and eating meat to gain strength. The taboos that Morani once had to follow such as no eating inside and no cooking are no longer strictly followed. Now Morani can eat inside and if necessary cook for themselves if no woman is around. Now the Morani spend

most of their time in the villages or at their own homes. According to the interviewee this lack of strength among today's Morani groupings is a bad thing. The community depends on the Morani like one would depend on soldiers, to protect, defend, and assist the community through bad times if the Morani are already in the village they will not form the first line of defense, they did as in the past. Perhaps the important question is what defenses are needed for the Maasai in the 21st century?

Female circumcision has drawn worldwide attention and criticism. Advocacy groups have called the practice inhumane and a violation of girl's rights to their bodies. In recent years, the term female genital mutilation has become commonplace to describe all forms of female circumcision. Efforts have been undertaken both on the national and international level to eliminate the practice of female circumcision. Most of the opposition to female circumcision comes from outside of the culture itself (Ray: 68). Female circumcision is even considered a crime in some countries such as Tanzania, where people can be fined large sums of money or face time in jail (Winterbottom et. al.: 49). NGOs and government organizations provide funding for education campaigns targeting communities that practice female circumcision. Some organizations are even trying to organize alternative rites of passage for females, but too often these alternative rites do not take in to account the local community, or the cultural norms and values surrounding the practice of female circumcision (Chege et.al.). As a result of these efforts many girls are being circumcised in secret and at younger ages.

For the Maasai, there are mixed feelings in regards to changes in the circumcision ritual. Some believe that the changes are bad, that they are destroying the culture.

So he say that the changes is not good is not good because there are many things the Maasai leave which is very important during circumcision because during circumcision you are taught by elders that you must follow this and this so if we reduce those things or we left this circumcision ceremony it means that there is no other stages there is no other time to taught these children from childhood stage to adult stage so that is a stage which is very important to about life about how to live with people about how to show him or herself to the society as the adult people is not a child so he say that that ceremony is good so we must follow those previous stages and those things.

-Excerpt from interview- Sefu, Male, Age 20

Yeah some sort of changes are happening nowadays for example because they starting to stop us no any circumcision for the girls so it's a kind of making us more sad because we are going to lose some sort of rule of the society so it's a kind of we be doing that in a hiding way not in open so we just trying to hide so that is the main changes happening.

-Excerpt from Interview Fumo, Male, Age 30

Other Maasai, especially in regards to the female circumcision ceremony, believe that these changes are a good thing.

You know this is scientific this is not good because when things done like that to reduce things from female yeah but for mail it is good because that's part which is going to be removed it is there's no importance there it is good to remove it but for female that thing is very bad because it allowed many things which. Future maybe when they give birth the blood to form so make a lot of problems so of course these people need education to know what the problem of these things.

-Excerpt from Interview- Erevu, Male, age 32

Conclusion



Figure 31: Group of Maasai men and women surrounding the warriors and young girls who are singing and dancing in celebration of the circumcision ceremony. Source: Allison Kotowicz, 2012.

Despite efforts to eradicate the practices of male and female rites of passage associated with transition from childhood to adulthood among the Maasai, it is likely that these rites will continue to be practiced and play a central role in Maasai culture. Efforts to change or alter rites of passage are met with resistance from within the Maasai community. Many Maasai believe that it is an attack on their traditional values and cultural norms. Efforts to change the current rites of passage have had low success rates. Too often these efforts do not take into account the circumstances specific to the Maasai and do not look into the worldview of the community and the cultural norms and values associated with the community. One individual does believe that the ceremonies will

change over time and that an alternative ceremony, especially for the circumcision of females, could occur.

Yeah things will change according to situation or to time or according to environment they just find another because nowadays there are other Maasai who have stopped this but a few of them know the disadvantages of this issue so they so they just make a different ceremony this ceremony they, and the blessed the child this lady is going to be another group and today they're going to be enough to be married and they do like that but most of them they are discouraging them they know them they regulate from the community but when this Maasai can be educated they can find another ceremony and change

-Excerpt from interview- Erevu, Male, Age 32

As the rites of passage and the age-set system change, we see that the meaning and consequences of this change differs depending upon the individual and their place in society. Many individuals, youth and elders, no longer remember the meanings or all the steps to the rituals associated with rites of passage. Even though the rites of circumcision have changed over time, it still remains a pivotal rite of passage and cornerstone of the age-set system marking the successful transition from childhood to adulthood for both genders.

The age-set system itself has also experienced changes over time. For example, in the past the rules and practices surrounding the age-set system such as taboo around eating food with members of the opposite sex were rigid. Morani were not allowed to eat or drink milk with women. The Morani would also live in manyattas, or small bomas, with their mothers and young uncircumcised girls for extended periods of time. Another example of how the age-set system has changed is the competition and tension between the elders and the warriors is decreasing in the 21st century. This tension could be seen in the elders and warriors difference in opinion to colonial laws and policies such as

construction or taxes. This is in part due to the decrease in time, role, and importance of the warriors in Maasai society and culture. In the past, for example, the warriors would go on cattle raids and lion hunts to increase their prestige and start their own herds of cattle. These practices are now banned by the government and occur with less and less frequency.

No longer confined merely to a village activity, there are different interests or stakeholders in the Maasai's rites of passage. This is a debate that is occurring on local, national, and international levels. On a local level, the largest concerns for individuals are how the young women are incorporated as full adult members into Maasai society and are then subsequently ready to be married. The circumcision rite of passage used to be a community wide event taking up to two weeks. Nowadays the ceremony has been reduced to only 1-2 days due to a number of factors including time, money, and children need to return to school. This change leaves a mark on the local community in several ways. These ceremonies provided the community with the necessary time and rituals to renew ties within the community and celebrate their culture. Society is recognizing and welcoming a new age-set and a new generation of adult members into Maasai society. The individuals who perform the circumcisions, typically old men and old women, are hired specially to perform the operation and practice the ritual. Women spend days preparing enormous amounts of food and refreshment for guests. Without ceremonies like this, the community does not have the same opportunity to celebrate and renew the ties that bind it together. Not only does the rite of circumcision and the incorporation of new age-sets unite the local community at the village level, but it also unites Maasai of all countries regardless of national or international borders.

On the national there is a debate between the retention of traditional practices such as rites of passage like female circumcision and also the need to be accepted and seen in a positive light by the international community. The international community has largely condemned the practice of female circumcision calling it a human rights abuse. As a result of the international communities views and policies towards female circumcision, Tanzania and other African countries have instituted laws banning the practice of female circumcision. If an individual is caught committing this crime they can be fined or placed in jail. At the same time there are those individuals who admire the Maasai and other tribes for maintaining their traditional culture and will even go to these ceremonies if they are invited by the Maasai themselves.

On the international level, we see the debate framed in terms of cultural rights versus human rights, with most perspectives favoring the human rights approach to banning female circumcision. This perspective has led to the banning and outlawing of female circumcisions in many African countries including Tanzania. While there are laws in place banning female circumcision, this ritual is still carried out by the majority of the Maasai, only now, the female circumcision ritual is being performed on girls of younger ages and in secret so as to not get caught and prosecuted by the police.

As rites of passage and the age-set system continue to change over time we see that there are a number of different levels and perspectives through which this change is being viewed. We see that change is not viewed the same way by individuals or by groups and that the rites of passage of the Maasai are constantly being negotiated and redefined. The rite of circumcision for males and females allows Maasai children to become full adult members in Maasai society with all of the tasks and responsibilities that

come with being an adult member of society. If this ritual goes away there will be no other rite of passage which marks the transition from childhood to adulthood. A new rite of passage will have to be created or the old rite of passage, circumcision, will have to be reformed. This has been done in some places where we see the disappearance of female circumcision but in its place there is a new celebration which marks this time for young women.

Circumcision is a rite of passage that forms a cornerstone in Maasai culture. Through the age-set system the Maasai recognize time and history of their people. The life cycle of boys are turned into warriors, who are then turned into elders is a practice that is as old as the people themselves. Although many people view the Maasai rites as a static phenomenon, like all cultures they are dynamic elements continue to change and transform over time. As the Maasai rites of passage are changing, the Maasai are faced with a number of difficult questions in regards to balancing Maasai identity and culture while participating in a more globalized and modernized world. Examples of these questions included: Will the Maasai rites of passage continue to be relevant to future generations? What are alternative means of marking the passage from childhood to adulthood? What effects will education continue to have on the youth population? Will the age-set system continue to be a relevant and effective means of organizing the Maasai?

Chapter 7

Discussion and Conclusion

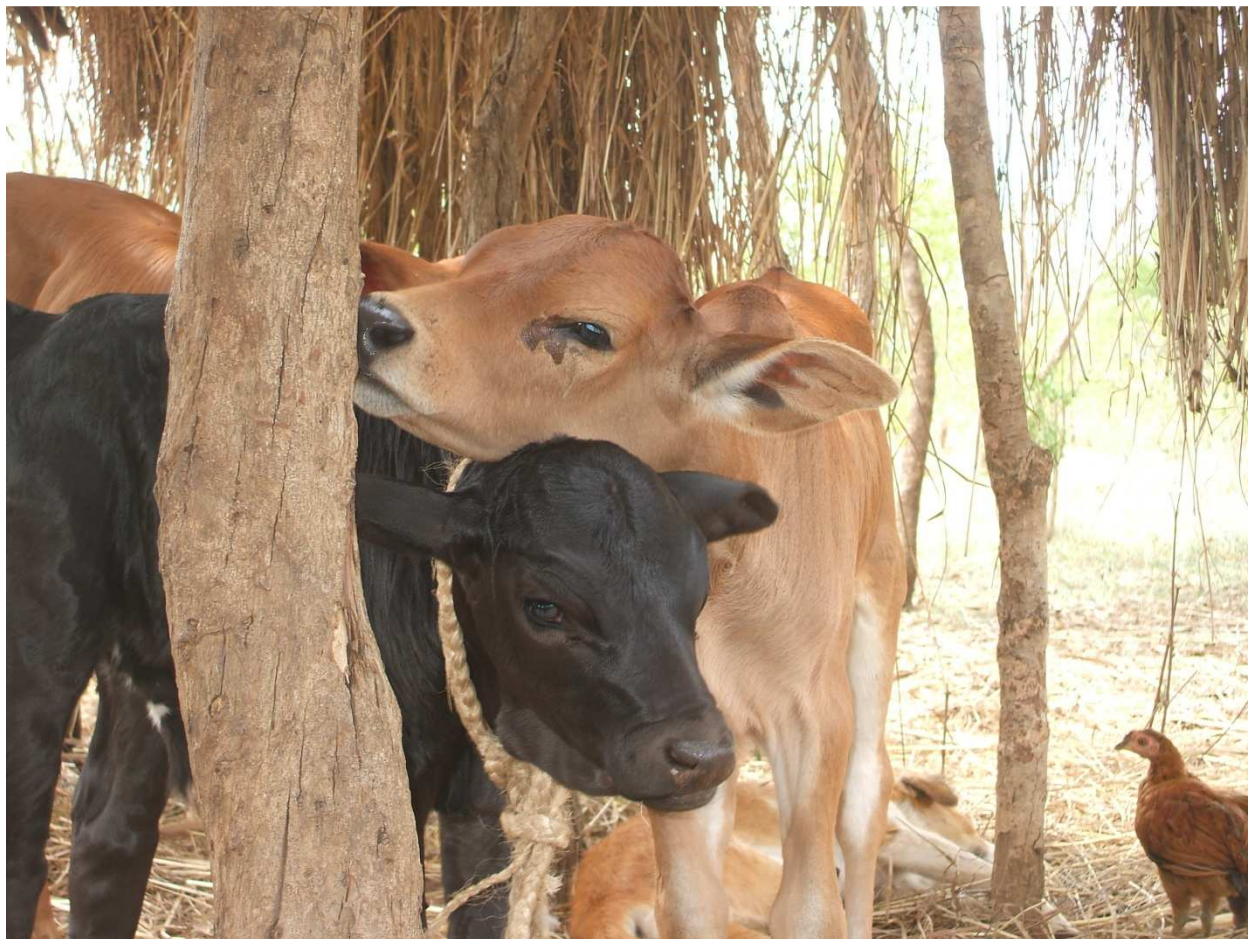


Figure 33: Young calves. Source: Allison Kotowicz, 2012.

Future of Maasai Identity

In the 21st century, the Maasai are redefining what it means to be Maasai.

Traditional Maasai identity and culture is a point of contention with forces such as social change, modernization, and globalization at play. Throughout this thesis, I have pointed

out that the Maasai are facing challenges and changes to their lifestyle and culture. These forces of change come from within the Maasai society and from outside of the Maasai society. Change and contentious issues can be seen in many areas of Maasai life. An example of this contention can be seen on the naming traditions among the Maasai.

Many younger Maasai have multiple names. In my study area it was not uncommon for a Maasai to have two or three names. At birth the Maasai are given one name, usually a traditional Maasai name. Once the child enters school, they will often receive a Swahili or western name. If the child is baptized they may also receive a Christian name. At times some Maasai even adopt initial names because they like the way a particular name sounds. Each name is used in different circumstances and different contexts. The Maasai way of life, nomadic pastoralism, and the culture of the cow is threatened. Pastoralism is becoming a less viable way of life. The Maasai face many challenges in pursuit of pastoralism that threaten the “culture of the cow”. The first challenge is the environment. Land for grazing and water for cattle and other small livestock is quickly shrinking. More and more land is being set aside for subsistence farming and cash crop agriculture. As land for pastoralists is shrinking, conflicts between pastoralists and farmers and the government over land and water rights are escalating and occurring frequently. With the loss of land, Maasai are not able to keep as many cattle and livestock necessary to support their families. More and more families are relying on small scale farming of crops such as maize to survive. In order to get extra money, Maasai women will sell jewelry and dairy products to local villagers and townspeople. In addition to farming, the Maasai now must regularly buy medicine for their cows to protect the animals from illness and disease. The younger generations of Maasai are more educated than previous

generations. Today, most young Maasai attend some form of private or nationally funded school. The numbers of Maasai who are becoming educated continues to increase. The younger generation is conflicted between the education they receive at school and the education that they receive at home instructing them on the traditional lifestyle and culture of the Maasai. The youth have more life choices, thus for them the culture of the cow lifestyle is not their only choice way life to access societal resources for survival. They can go to college, start a business, or work in the cities. It is clear that overtime Maasai youth are becoming further and further removed from their natal homes and their cattle.

The traditional clothing of the Maasai has changed from the past to the present and continues to change. Initially, the traditional clothing of the Maasai consisted of animal hides. Today most Maasai do not associate the hides with their traditional clothing. For them the traditional Maasai clothing is the clothing that is manufactured in Southeast Asia and is imported into Tanzania and sold to the Maasai at local markets or towns. Clothing for the younger generation provides a means of expression and is used dynamically in different situations and circumstances. In towns, cities, and at school many Maasai youth wear Swahili or western clothing so that they can blend in and not stick out. Maasai traditional clothing and decorations are being bought and sold to nationals and tourists around the world. The Maasai, especially the traditional look of the Maasai in traditional clothing in the bush, has come to symbolize the Tanzanian nation and the promise of tourists to see a people living on a pristine landscape.

The rites of passage that each Maasai experiences are also changing. The most important rite of passage for the Maasai, past and present, is the circumcision ritual

associated with the transition from childhood to adulthood. The circumcision ceremony is affected by religion, education, and international and national policies and laws. The circumcision ritual, which once took two to three months, is now done within the span of a few days because children must return to school. Children are being circumcised at younger and younger ages, especially young girls. Circumcision for girls is outlawed by the Tanzanian government and condemned by the international community. When circumcision for girls does happen it is usually done in secret with girls as young as two or three years old. As the Maasai rite of passage circumcision is changing one must question whether how relevant is the ceremony to the Maasai today? How will children pass from childhood to adulthood in Maasai society?

The areas examined within this thesis illustrate that change is inevitable and is happening quickly. We see that the Maasai are faced with an ever increasing number of questions of what is Maasai identity. Today, Maasai must ask themselves how they preserve their traditions and culture while still moving forward and prospering in an ever increasing global and modern world.

What we see from the data is that identity and representation are not static phenomena, but rather dynamic phenomena which are constantly being redefined and renegotiated by different stakeholders. Each stakeholder also has a number of different identities and perspectives which come in to play in defining what their vested interests are. The maintenance of authenticity, identity, and tradition required time, effort, and constant renegotiation between different perspectives and different levels of stakeholders.

An individual's or group's identity is not a static entity. It is dynamic, composed of many parts and layers. Identity changes through time and space. The Maasai, as they are today, are not the same as the Maasai from the past or the Maasai in the future. What it means to be Maasai is a constantly evolving identity that is negotiated and renegotiated by individuals and communities. Throughout space and time I have presented difference aspects of the Maasai identity through symbols, behaviors, and beliefs. Maasai identity will continue to change and be a contentious area of definition, but I do not think it will disappear. Younger Maasai are now in the process of shaping and redefining their culture in the face of globalization and modernization. Older generations will probably be able to distinguish some common elements and features of Maasai identity, but not all of them, just like the children born in the future may recognize some elements and features of Maasai identity as it was defined by their parents and grandparents. Culture change and identity change are inevitable, but it is the fact that identity and culture are dynamic and always changing that allows it to redefine and reinvent itself so that it has meaning to current generations of people. Questions still remain as to what will happen to the Maasai and their lifestyle and what "being maasai" will look like in the future.

Relevance of the data

Although my research looks at data specifically relevant to the Maasai, the types of changes seen in this research in regards to identity occur everywhere. Once we examine the social processes that are relevant to identity creation, formation, and maintenance we can begin to look at other examples of identity and generalize this information for other peoples and cultures. Examples of some of these processes include social change, identity formation, globalization, and modernization. Issues of identity are

contentious issues played out across space and time. All individuals and groups have multiple identities which are sometimes in alignment and sometimes contentious. We all share multiple identities that shift depending upon context. Therefore, a Maasai is not only a Maasai but shares multiple identities including being a Tanzanian, mother, father, brother, sister, student, and employee among many other possible choices. Identity is a more complicated issue than just surface representations. Identity is a complex phenomenon that is created and maintained by members inside and outside of a particular culture. A person or group's identity is informed by symbols, behaviors, and beliefs.

Role of the Anthropologist

One of the key points that we must examine is the role and purpose of the anthropologist, anthropology, and ethnography in the lives of the people we study and the implications our work has on others. What are the anthropologist's responsibilities? As anthropologists and researchers, we must remember that our work serves multiple purposes with multiple meanings depending on who is reading and interpreting our work. One responsibility that we must be aware of is the anthropologist and ethnography play in the memory of a people's traditions and cultures. Oftentimes, the anthropologist's work is used to document and help people preserve or rediscover parts of their identity have forgotten over time or lost to younger generations. An example of this when I was doing my fieldwork, I read A. C. Hollis (1905). The book, in Maasai and English, documents aspects of the Maasai language and culture. When I shared this book with the people I was studying and living with, they used the book as a tool to remember certain aspects of their culture through stories Hollis recorded. It was both a written and visual reminder

about the Maasai culture from that point in time in history. In this instance, this work serves as a repository used by the culture group.

Anthropologists also play a role in the representation of a group and their culture and customs. We can see this connection in the beginning of this paper in the literature review section discussing representation. Anthropologists have played, and continue to play, a role in shaping the representation of a particular place and people to the outside world. Our research documents a particular phenomenon or people, but we must remember that our findings need to be interpreted in the context the time and place when it occurred. Our ethnographies and research are like snapshots showing readers brief pictures in history. Our research builds on the past bodies of work and is often used to make recommendation about what should or could be done in the future. Our research, like the people and cultures we study, does not exist as static entities in a vacuum, but exists instead in a complex and dynamic world.

Another question that each anthropologist must ask is what are the roles, responsibilities, and relationships I have with the individuals and the community where I conduct my research? Do I want to have long term or short term relationships? What is the purpose and goal of the work in respect to the people we study? Are we giving people a voice, standing as witnesses, or just mere observers? I have decided that, I cannot examine only working with a group of individuals for short period of time. I am a proponent of continuous work with a group or individuals over time and space in which the researcher tries to find ways to give back to that community. For this research, I asked the people who participated in the project what they wanted from me and I told

them what I wanted for the future. I want to continue to work with the community and assist in their activities to preserve their culture.

A good example of illustrating the points above regarding the role of the anthropologist, anthropology, and ethnography through time and space are seen in the works of anthropologists with the Nuer people. One of the first anthropologists to work and write about the Nuer was E.E. Evans-Pritchard's (1940) classic ethnography on the Nuer in the 1940s looking at the Nuer's social structure and pastoralist lifestyle. Sharon E. Hutchinson's (1996) work with the Nuer in the 20th century looking at the impact of money, war, and the state on the Nuer populations. Finally we have Jon D. Holtzman's work among the Nuer refugees in Minnesota. The capacity to understand across time and space the formation, transformation and reformation of identity is an intriguing area of inquiry for anthropologist

Future Research

Further work remains to be done with the Maasai of Tanzania. One issue of particular relevance to the Maasai lifestyle and identity is their relationship to wildlife and natural conservation models. Many of the Maasai live near surrounding wildlife parks that are devoted to the conservation of wildlife. These wildlife parks pose a number of challenges to the Maasai and their livelihood including the importance of finding adequate grazing land and water for livestock, disease transference between domestic and wild animals, and the importance of protecting herds from wild animals such as lions.

For my doctoral dissertation, I still plan to work with the Maasai but this time with a focus on environmental issues. I want to examine the relationships and dynamics that exist between local indigenous populations and different models of wildlife conservation and preservation. This is in part a question of representation and a question of assumptions. When one thinks about a national park, the typical model that comes to mind is the Yellowstone model in which nature is pristine and untouched by mankind. This model can be deceiving, especially in the east African context where wildlife and humans have existed for thousands of years side by side. Populations like the Maasai and the Hadzabe, pastoralists and hunter-gatherers that once lived on these now protected lands are viewed in two ways. The first is that of the protector and indigenous conservation taking care of the land and the animals. The other point of view is that these populations and their lifestyles are destructive to the natural environment and pose a threat to the wildlife. The conversations surrounding conservation tend to become polarized between saving the wildlife and preserving the lifestyle and cultures of the local populations. I want to dissect this perceived dualism and show the complications and benefits of different models of conservation. I will look at three different models of conservation and the interaction between these conservation areas and the local indigenous populations. These areas include the Ngorongoro Conservation, the Serengeti National Park, and the Maswa Game Reserve.

This thesis aims to illuminate another side of the story that is often not told when considering conservation measures: that of the indigenous populations. I wish to understand the local perceptions of wildlife and cultural conservation and how this applies to their daily lives. I wish to record indigenous models and ideas about

conservation that are different from the current, dominant models of conservation in use. My goal is to record the experiences of local indigenous populations with different models of conservation and to compare and contrast the positive and negative aspects of each model of conservation to the local populations. I would also like to propose possible suggestions for future collaboration and conservation work which takes into consideration not only the prevailing concerns of wildlife conservationists but to also include the concerns and possible assistance of the local populations.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Interview Chart

FAMILY #1		
Gender	DOB	LENGTH OF INTERVIEW (MINUTES)
Male	1947	65
Female	1960	47
Female	1979	42
Female	1980	30
Female	1986	62
Male	1981	61
Female	1989	16
Female	1985	37
Male	1991	46
Female	1969	40
Male	1988	54
Female	1932?	60
Female	1968	40
Male		29
Male	1990	28
Female	1966 or 1967	33
Male	1990	91
Male	March 1994	48
Female	1973	40
Male	1989	61
Male	1992	44
Male	1964	17
Female	1978	46
Female		35
Male	1971	43
Female	1994	20

FAMILY #2		
Gender	DOB	LENGTH OF INTERVIEW
Male	1950	83
Female	1987	30
Female	1990	22
Male	1983	38

Female	1990	50
Female	1990	40
Female	1993	28
Female	1965	57
Female	1990	31
Male	1983	66
Male	1986	42
Female	1990	26
Female	1922?	47
Female	1965	82
Female	1982	51
Male	1981	68
Male	1984	36
Male	1987	42
Female	1991	55
Female	1968	61

FAMILY #3		
Gender	DOB	LENGTH OF INTERVIEW
Male		35
Female	1968	40
Male	1975	58
Female	1986	32
Male	1976	36
Female	1992	20
Female	1942?	64

FAMILY #4		
Gender	DOB	LENGTH OF INTERVIEW
Male	1986	49
Female	1922?	51

FAMILY #5		
Gender	DOB	LENGTH OF INTERVIEW

Male	1956	70
Female	1973	25
Male	1991	49
Female	1934?	68
Female	1972	43
Female	1989	34
Male	1988	44
Male	1991	38
Female	1957	37
Male	1975	45
Male	1972	74
Female	1990	35
Male	1993	123
Female	1958	33
Female	1991	26
Male	1979	63

Appendix B: Verbal Consent Script

“Maasai Identity in the 21st Century”- Verbal Consent Script

1. General Information

Study title:

Maasai Identity in the 21st Century

Person in Charge of Study (Principal Investigator):

PI: Dr. Cheryl Ajrotutu

Ph.D., University of California, Berkeley

Associate Professor Anthropology and Associate Director, Cultures and Communities Program University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

SPI: Allison Kotowicz

BA- Beloit College, anthropology

Research Assistant/Translator: Jacob Galahenga

2. Study Description

You are being asked to participate in a research study. Your participation is completely voluntary. You do not have to participate if you do not want to.

Study description:

The Maasai people of Eastern Africa have managed to retain much of their culture and traditions in the face of colonialism, pressures from outsiders, and the growing technologies and influences of the 21st century. As the world becomes more interconnected, the Maasai lifestyle in relation to raising cattle is becoming more difficult to maintain. What will happen to the Maasai culture when raising cattle is no longer a viable way of life? What happens when the lifestyle and traditions of the culture are broken? In the 21st century, we are able to see the changes, challenges, and the consequences of globalization and modern life more clearly. The changes that are unfolding may influence and change what it means to be Maasai. My research will ask questions of how the modern world is affecting the Maasai, especially the youth who make decisions consciously and unconsciously that are shaped by both their culture and outside influences. How will the Maasai youth honor their culture while embracing the changes of the 21st century? I seek to understand the challenges the Maasai people face regarding who they are as a people in the 21st century. Guiding research questions are: Who are the Maasai? How do the Maasai see themselves and others? What does it mean to be Maasai? What makes the Maasai different from other tribes? How have symbols and ceremonies changed over time?

Through my research I will be able to give an account of social change and transformation from the perspective of the people experiencing these changes. Information from this research can be used to identify cultural practices/strategies that can assist other cultures and groups of people who want to keep their heritage and still move forward globally and economically.

The research will take place in the Maasai village of Melela, located in the Mvomero District, in the Morogoro Region of Tanzania. Recruitment will take place through the help of a research assistant from the area. The research will focus on 3-4 families in the village of Melela. I hope to get interviews with both men and women over 18 years of age. All information gathered will be kept confidential.

3. Study Procedures

What will I be asked to do if I participate in the study?

The subjects will not need to go anywhere nor do anything special expect to go about their daily life and activities. The researcher will use methods of participant observation and in-depth interviews with villagers to collect ethnographic data. If given permission by the subjects the researcher will use audio, video, and photographic recordings. If the subjects do not wish to be recorded they only need to tell the researcher and they will still be able to participate in the study.

4. Risks and Minimizing Risks

What risks will I face by participating in this study?

- There are no foreseeable risks for participating in this research study.

5. Benefits

Will I receive any benefit from my participation in this study?

- There are no benefits to you other than to further research.

6. Study Costs and Compensation

Will I be charged anything for participating in this study?

There are no charges associated with the participation of this study.

Are subjects paid or given anything for being in the study?

- “You will not be compensated for taking part in this research study.

7. Confidentiality

What happens to the information collected?

All information collected about you during the course of this study will be kept confidential to the extent permitted by law. We may decide to present what we find to others, or publish our results in scientific journals or at scientific conferences. Information that identifies you personally will not be released without your written permission. Only Allison Kotowicz, Dr. Cheryl Ajitutu, (my academic advisor) and Jacob Galahenga will have access to the information. However, the Tanzania Commission for Science and Technology and other Tanzanian governmental organization, the Institutional Review Board at UW-Milwaukee or appropriate federal agencies like the Office for Human Research Protections may also choose to review this study's records.

At the beginning of each interview the participants will be informed of the scope of the study. Over the course of the study period, study participants will be encouraged to ask the researcher questions. The researchers' contact information will be given to all participants. Data collected will be analyzed qualitatively and classified and organized using pseudonyms for participants who wish to remain anonymous. The participants in the study can at any time during the research project opt to remove themselves from the study or refuse to include specific types of data they wish to remain confidential.

8. Alternatives

Are there alternatives to participating in the study?

- There are no known alternatives available to you other than not taking part in this study.

9. Voluntary Participation and Withdrawal

What happens if I decide not to be in this study?

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You may choose not to take part in this study. If you decide to take part, you can change your mind later and withdraw from the study. You are free to not answer any questions or withdraw at any time. Your decision will not change any present or future relationships with the University of Wisconsin Milwaukee.

10. Questions

Who do I contact for questions about this study?

For more information about the study or the study procedures or treatments, or to withdraw from the study, contact:

PI: Dr. Cheryl Ajitutu

Ph.D., University of California, Berkeley
Associate Professor Anthropology and Senior Associate Director, Cultures and Communities Program University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

Email: yinka@uwm.edu

Phone Number: (414) 229-4390

Address: Department of Anthropology
290 Sabin Hall, P.O. Box 413
3413 N. Downer Ave.
Milwaukee, WI 53201

SPI: Allison Kotowicz

BA- Beloit College, anthropology

Email: kotowicz@uwm.edu

Phone Number: (414)750-3153

Address: 4629 South Hatley Ave
Cudahy, Wisconsin USA 53110

Who do I contact for questions about my rights or complaints towards my treatment as a research subject?

The Institutional Review Board may ask your name, but all complaints are kept in confidence.

Institutional Review Board
Human Research Protection Program
Department of University Safety and Assurances
University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee
P.O. Box 413
Milwaukee, WI 53201
(414) 229-3173

Appendix C: Interview Guide- Youth

Interview Guide: Youth (over 18 years of age)

Guiding research questions are: Who are the Maasai? How do the Maasai see themselves and others? What constitutes the identity of the Maasai? How have symbols and rituals changed over time and space? How has globalization and modernization affected Maasai identity?

Personal Information/Background

Name

Age

Who are your kin who live in this village? (I will construct kinship charts.)

Language History

What languages do you speak?

Which language did you learn first, second, etc?

Where did you learn these languages?

Do you mix the languages when you speak?

Give an example

Do you use one language more often than another language?

When do you use one language versus another language?

What is the language primarily spoken at home?

What language spoken with peers/friends?

Education

Have you ever been to school?

How many years of school did you attend?

Where did you attend school?

How do you think your education or lack of education has affected your life?

What sort of things did you learn from your parents? (Informal education at home, etc.).

How has education changed the Maasai culture and the Maasai people?

Is education a good or bad thing for Maasai youth? How do you think education has affected Maasai youth?

Why or why not?

In what ways can education help and hurt the Maasai people?

In what ways can education help or hurt the Maasai their culture?

Did your family approve of your education?

How is the education you receive from home different from the education you receive at school?

Cultural Values

“Culture of the cow”

Describe your work:

Describe you daily activities:

If I was to follow you yesterday- what did you do? Was this a typical day for you?

How many cattle/livestock do you own?

How has Maasai way of life changed in relation to raising cattle?

What are some of the challenges that the Maasai face as a people who manage cows for their livelihood?

Do you think that the Maasai will be able to continue raising cattle as their livelihood? If not what will happen?

What roles do cows/cattle play in Maasai life?

What role do cows/cattle play in the Maasai culture?

Do you visit the city?

When you visit the city where do you go? What places do you visit? (city/towns)

What activities that you participate (social/play/leisure)?

Describe and where /when take place

Clothing

What kind of clothing are you wearing now?

Do you wear other types of clothing?

When do you wear each type of clothing?

Does the clothing you wear have any symbolic meaning? Does this symbolism have meaning for the Maasai? Does the symbolism have meaning for outsiders?

What is the difference between different types of clothing (age sets, gender, etc.)

Religion

What religion(s) do the Maasai practice?

What religion(s) do you practice?

Do some Maasai still practice their traditional religion?

Can you describe the similarities between Maasai religion and other religions?

Ceremonies (Rites of Passage/Rituals)

What types of ceremonies did you experience as you were growing up? Please describe them.

What ceremonies do you expect have in the future?

Where the ceremonies that you experienced the same or similar to those of your parents or grandparents?

Are you still a part of the age set system? Where are you now on the age set system (example: warrior, young man or woman, married, elder, etc)?

Are there ceremonies that all villagers must go through?

Have the ceremonies changed over time? If so explain or give some examples.

What ceremonies do Maasai go through as the age?

Do young men and women still undergo various ceremonies from childhood to adulthood?

Are the young men still incorporated into the age set system?

How has the age system changed over time?

Are there rituals that have you/your parents have undergone that the younger generation has not?

Insider/Outsider Perspective on Identity

How do you think other people perceive the uniqueness of the Maasai culture and its people?

How does the Tanzanian government perceive and portray the Maasai?

How does the international community perceive and portray the Maasai?

Gender

What are the positions and responsibilities that women have in the Maasai culture? Are these roles only for women or can they be filled by men?

What are the positions and responsibilities that men have in the Maasai culture? Are these roles only for men or can they be filled by women?

How is your life similar and different from your mother/father, grandmother/grandfather?

Do you think that positions and responsibilities of men and women have changed over time? If so please describe some of the changes and give examples of these changes.

Appendix D- Interview Guide- Elders

Interview Guide: Elders

Highlight in your life

What did you do for fun?

What were your responsibilities?

What major changes have you observed in your lifetime?

Personal Information/Background

Name

Age

Who are your kin who live in this village? (I will construct kinship charts)

Language History

What languages do you speak?

Which language did you learn first, second, etc?

Where did you learn these languages?

Do you mix the languages when you speak?

Give an example

Do you use one language more often than another language?

When do you use one language versus another language?

What is the language primarily spoken at home?

What language spoken with peers/friends?

Education

Have you ever been to school?

How many years of school did you attend?

Where did you attend school?

How do you think your education or lack of education has affected your life?

What sort of things did you learn from your parents? (Informal education at home, etc.).

How has education changed the Maasai culture and the Maasai people?

Is education a good or bad thing for Maasai youth? How do you think education has affected Maasai youth?

Why or why not?

In what ways can education help and hurt the Maasai people?

In what ways can education help or hurt the Maasai their culture?

Did your family approve of your education?

How is the education you receive from home different from the education you receive at school?

Cultural Values

“Culture of the cow”

Describe your work:

Describe you daily activities:

If I was to follow you yesterday- what did you do? Was this a typical day for you?

How many cattle/livestock do you own?

How has Maasai way of life changed in relation to raising cattle?

What are some of the challenges that the Maasai face as a people who manage cows for their livelihood?

Do you think that the Maasai will be able to continue raising cattle as their livelihood? If not what will happen?

What roles do cows/cattle play in Maasai life?

What role do cows/cattle play in the Maasai culture?

Do you visit the city?

When you visit the city where do you go? What places do you visit? (city/towns)

What activities that you participate (social/play/leisure)?

Describe and where /when take place

Clothing

What kind of clothing are you wearing now?

Do you wear other types of clothing?

When do you wear each type of clothing?

Does the clothing you wear have any symbolic meaning? Does this symbolism have meaning for the Maasai? Does the symbolism have meaning for outsiders?

What is the difference between different types of clothing (age sets, gender, etc.)

Religion

What religion(s) do the Maasai practice?

What religion(s) do you practice?

Do some Maasai still practice their traditional religion?

Can you describe the similarities between Maasai religion and other religions?

Ceremonies (Rites of Passage/Rituals)

What types of ceremonies did you experience as you were growing up? Please describe them.

What ceremonies do you expect have in the future?

Where the ceremonies that you experienced the same or similar to those of your parents or grandparents?

Are you still a part of the age set system? Where are you now on the age set system (example: warrior, young man or woman, married, elder, etc)?

Are there ceremonies that all villagers must go through?

Have the ceremonies changed over time? If so explain or give some examples.

What ceremonies do Maasai go through as the age?

Do young men and women still undergo various ceremonies from childhood to adulthood?

Are the young men still incorporated into the age set system?

How has the age system changed over time?

Are there rituals that have you/your parents have undergone that the younger generation has not?

Insider/Outsider Perspective on Identity

How do you think other people perceive the uniqueness of the Maasai culture and its people?

How does the Tanzanian government perceive and portray the Maasai?

How does the international community perceive and portray the Maasai?

Gender

What are the positions and responsibilities that women have in the Maasai culture? Are these roles only for women or can they be filled by men?

What are the positions and responsibilities that men have in the Maasai culture? Are these roles only for men or can they be filled by women?

How is your life similar and different from your mother/father, grandmother/grandfather?

Do you think that positions and responsibilities of men and women have changed over time? If so please describe some of the changes and give examples of these changes.