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Pluralism and ethnic conflict in Tanzania's arid lands: the case of the Maasai and the WaArusha

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Introduction: The conflict between ethnic competition and trust

In Africa, ethnicity has always been an important factor in the development of most local groups, influencing their access to such resources as power, assets, and even knowledge, which in turn effects wider forms of economic, social and political change. It is, however, important to realize that viewing social change through the vulnerable eyes of ethnicity does not engender improvement in the picture of economic and social change within a group. It may lead, however, to one seeing differences in development from the perspective of human rights. This is particularly the case with increasing ethnic or "tribal" conflict over access to resources and power, and when considering ethnic differences regarding issues of autonomy, and even self-esteem and pride belonging to a given community.

Even today, as the tide of political liberalization and democracy is spreading through Africa, concrete reports of ethnic conflict continue (though these are not the essence and direction of this paper). It is true that we hear of war and civil strife in African countries like Somalia, Ethiopia, Sudan, Burundi, Angola and many other countries. In this context, in Tanzania, the magnitude and the degree of conflict is relatively small.

Ethnic conflict as it is referred to in this paper stems from cultural and economic bases, regarding the variations which exist in the land use patterns and economic modes of production of two groups, rather than the marked ethnic conflict such as is occurring in Somalia or Bosnia. The tribal conflict between the Maasai and the Waarusha is primarily related to differences in their cultural and economic modes of production and the strategies which are currently used to support these systems, but which undermine the peaceful co-existence of the two groups. Disparities and inequalities in their opportunities for development are jeopardizing the possibility for Maasai and Waarusha to be equal partners and citizens of one peaceful nation.

The Maasai and the Waarusha have co-existed in a kind of affinal bond relationship since before the 19th century when the pastoral Maasai moved southwards from Kenya to their present location in Northern Tanzania. Their histories show a clear pattern of relationship and shared identity which is the basis for their association; the two groups speak more or less the same language, with minor differences in vocabulary and intonations. They also share a similar culture. The primary distinction between them lies in their different economic behaviour, which comes from their different occupations and forms of production. The Maasai are pas-

toralists who basically engage in livestock subsistence production for their livelihood. The Waarusha are oriented more towards agricultural subsistence production. One of the serious conflicts between the two tribes is associated with land grabbing and acquisition of resources, using conflicting economic and production strategies and techniques. It is said that the Waarusha are silently and trickily encroaching on the rangelands most suitable for subsistence livestock production, forcing the Maasai herders into more marginal areas. This land conflict has implications for the mutual development of the two tribes and the relations between them.

This paper attempts to give a description of what is actually happening on the ground in relation to the land conflict between the two Maasai and Arusha, along with a kind of logical interpretation. Their conflict is perhaps difficult for an outsider to understand in the context of the similar culture and language shared by the Maasai and the Waarusha. I will try to resist from adopting an ethnocentric bias towards any particular group, in order to clearly address the issues behind the conflict.

The paper will first give a brief historical description of the origin of the two tribes and the nature of their past coexistence. Most of this description is based on person-to-person non-structured interviews made by the writer randomly meeting respondents from the two tribes. Secondly, the paper will use the two tribal groups as a case to focus on the question of land acquisition, the issue of the problem of ownership and the differential exploitation of resources. In light of the above land conflict, concrete examples will be given of how the legitimate power and authority of the Maasai is being virtually eroded; with more land being taken away by the

Waarusha and other outsiders. This will lead to the question of access to alternative economic resources and access to social, political and legal services which are important for the well-being of the Maasai tribe.

The paper will present several cases of observed conflict and will consider the variations present in each issue of conflict in order to identify the nature and sources of conflict and how they are interrelated. Finally, the paper will look at the implications of the conflict and suggest some possible intervention strategies to be mounted to diffuse friction and avoid increased polarization, enabling the two groups to maintain an equal and balanced co-existence for their future parallel development and the evolution of a just and democratic society in Tanzania.

The historical origin of Maasai/Arusha coexistence

The Original Context

The Maasai. The Maasai of Northern Tanzania are found mainly scattered throughout the four Maasai districts in Arusha region, namely Monduli, Ngorongoro, Kiteto and the new Simanjiro. Due to occasional changes in the official administrative boundaries, a large number of Maasai have been displaced and are now residing in the adjacent regions and districts of Kilimanjaro, Tanga and Morogoro. This paper will consider only the Maasai in the four districts in Arusha region.

The Maasai are said to originate from the so-called "Maa speaking people", who are associated with the expansion and movement of the "Iloibonok" families (who are diviners, prophets and ritual leaders). One point of view holds that the famous family of Mbatian, which triumphed over that of com-

peting ritual leaders, was responsible for the creation of the Maasai proper, as distinguished from other Maa-speaking groups, like the Samburu of Kenya and the Ilparakuyu in Tanzania, who are said not to have Iloibonok.

According to Massaro (1989), Talbot situates the origins of the Maasai at 460 years ago in Northern Kenya. By 1640, they arrived in the centre of what is now Kenya Maasailand. During the next 150 years, they moved over 300 miles southwards, concentrating in present Tanzania around 1800 (Massaro 1989: 26).

In 1880, the Maasai had reached the peak of their holdings, of land, cattle and power. It is estimated that they occupied 200,000 sq. km. Before the colonialists (the Germans and then the British) arrived, as much as 30% of Kenya, and all of Northern Tanzania, was occupied by the Maasai, who through warfare took away most of the land from former owners. In the 1890s, the Maasai were seriously affected by a series of catastrophes. According to Massaro they were affected by human and livestock epidemics followed by drought and famine, which led the human population to fall by more than half (Massaro 1989: 28).

At the turn of the century, they experienced further defeat with the European penetration of Maasai land. It was during the colonial period that most of the best grazing land in the higher potential altitudes with permanent water was taken and given to White settlers and indigenous small-holder agriculturalists like the Waarusha. This land adjudication introduced the first breakdown of the Maasai traditional grazing ecosystems.

In Tanzania, the colonialists managed to restrict the Maasai to a reserve in the semi-arid areas which comprises the present Maasailand. The best areas

were secured for European settlement and eventually the Maasai lost the high potential land around Mt. Kilimanjaro and Meru. It was in 1929, when the colonial government established the administrative boundaries on tribal lines, that the creation of the Maasai district and Arusha district was made possible. This allowed the Waarusha to have their own district and kept further agricultural encroachment of Maasailand under control.

In the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s, more land was alienated for agricultural production and much was earmarked for the formation of the region's famous National Parks and Wildlife protected areas. The Maasai were theoretically going to be compensated, as indicated through the establishment of Development Plans for the provision of water resources: however only scanty services were ever provided, those including the Olbalbal pipeline, Kitwai Bore hole and dams, and measures for the control of tsetse flies, as with the Simanjiro tsetse clearing programme. This development plan collapsed in 1955.

However, during the colonial period, the Maasai were an autonomous and powerful group, responsible for their own area through a local representative council governed through the indirect rule of the British. After Independence, the autonomous legitimate control of their land and affairs was diminished, and power and control was left to the state.

The Waarusha. The Waarusha have co-existed with the Maasai since the 19th century. It has been reported that these people originate from a small, now almost extinct, minority Bantu group called "Ilkikoine". It is believed this group occupied what at present is called "Arusha Chini", approximately 24 km south of Moshi town near the

present T.P.C. Sugar Company. The Waarusha (Ilarusa), as a weak minority, moved to join and reside with the Maasai on the slopes of Mount Meru, to provide the needed labour and skills for the growing of tobacco, which was a precious commodity for the Iloibonok and in great demand by the entire Maasai community. The Maasai by then were the rightful residents of the slopes of Mt. Meru. The Iloibonok, who protected the Waarusha for their labour and tobacco production, resided in the present Seliani area. At that time the Maasai were a proud and egalitarian people, economically, politically and culturally very powerful.

The colonial administrative division caused the Waarusha to occupy the slopes of Mt. Meru, hand in hand with the settlers. They managed to intensify agricultural production, growing crops including maize, beans, bananas and coffee. After independence, these people experienced land and population pressure which forced them to look for alternative areas. It was at this point that they started encroaching on the Maasai District, using various tactics as affinal brothers. This started the sensitive land conflict between the two tribes.

Maasai-Waarusha Co-existence

There is no single or simple diagnosis adequate to describe how or why these two groups have coexisted, or to thoroughly explain the nature of their relationship and the source of conflict which is the focus of this paper. The source of the disparities between the two groups is rather complex. However, historical, political and economic factors have been very significant regarding the current situation and the form of coexistence between the two groups.

From a historical point of view,

the weaker minority Waarusha, who started as traditional serfs and agricultural clients of the Maasai, associated themselves closely and deeply with their lords. This engendered processes of acculturation and assimilation and the creation of an ethnic affinal bond, first as neighbours and later as reciprocal brothers. This is substantiated by the Waarusha speaking the Maasai language and sharing a similar culture. For example, the Waarusha have the same type of political and social organization and institutions as the Maasai, the only difference being that the Waarusha have only four clans, while the Maasai have seven. They also share some rituals and age-grade ceremonies.

Linguistic and cultural bonds have remained constant over time, strengthening and expanding to include varied friendship associations and a strong reciprocal relationship of mutual assistance. These included reciprocal bonds and exchanges, both collectively and individually. There is now an exchange/friendship network encompassing the exchange of food grains and other material goods, which has developed into a kind of trade for the provision of food and other goods during the occasional cattle market days.

The solidarity between the two tribes intensified after Independence, in the face of the nationalistic spirit and rhetoric used to try to diffuse the strong tribal orientation which had existed during the colonial period. This caused the two tribes to become closer, sharing a cultural pride in their ethnic origin against the challenges and perspectives of what an Independent nation had to offer. This is very clear in the political arena where the two tribes were strongly united and labelled as one "Maasai" group.

Despite the positive development of their co-existence over a long period,

the two groups tended to look at each other with combination of indifference and somewhat ethnocentric prejudice, rooted in their diverse origins and their respective patterns of divergent practice. The Maasai, who feel superior, tend to look down at the Waarusha based on various physical and behavioral criteria, ranging from attitudes, competencies, knowledge and interests to a disparagement of the Waarusha way of doing things. Conversely, the Waarusha tended to despise and look down upon the Maasai, and especially the Maasai attitude towards change, which the Waarusha see as conservative and timid. These sorts of conflicting attitudes are evidenced by the different preoccupations and production strategies of the two groups, pastoral and agricultural. As the century has progressed; however, the Waarusha have shown themselves both clever and ambitious, by challenging their kin brothers to the extent of increasing their political and economic power at the expense of the Maasai. They have thus become the more progressive group in all respects, while the Maasai are progressively becoming weaker and more impoverished.

Background to the conflict

In Tanzania, land has been the critical factor in a number of tribal conflicts and unrest. These have been aggravated by the struggle for the creation of a more agriculture-based economy at the expense of the vast livestock rangeland areas. These areas have long been seen as lying idle by those who propose they should be placed under agriculture in order to gain optimal economic use. The situation coincides with land and population pressures in areas adjacent to the pastoralist areas; for example, severe land and population pres-

sure is felt in the Arumeru District and the whole of Kilimanjaro Region which borders the Maasai districts.

Furthermore, the above-mentioned pressure provided a catalyst for the creation of a policy of villagization throughout the country from 1976 onwards. This created a completely new settlement programme, involving a vast migration of people from one area to the other irrespective of tribal lines and residence. This disturbed the colonial system which tended to protect indigenous tribal areas. Tribal and ethnic rule was disbanded and tribes were forced to move and occupy land to which they had no recognized traditional rights. A good example is the great influx of members of adjacent tribes like the Warangi, Gogo, Waarusha, Pare and Wazigua into the four Maasai Districts, predominantly in the three districts of Monduli, Kiteto and Simanjiro.

As well, land conflict has disrupted to a great extent the recognized rights to ownership and to acquire and hold land. During the colonial period, the government deliberately created tribal lands which were legitimately recognized. This formal legitimate rule and authority was replaced by a nationalistic type of administrative structure which transferred legitimate authority and rule over to the State, ideologically embracing the goal of national unity and a government that safeguarded equity, peace, and human freedom, irrespective of tribal, racial, and religious differences. This transferred the rights to land ownership to the State under a sort of trusteeship, but in fact practically allowed many privileged groups, including the wealthy and politically powerful, to make moves to acquire land for themselves. Much land was acquired and put under large scale, commercial agricultural production. Examples are Lokisalie in Monduli and

Naberera in Simanjiro Districts where more than 40,000 and 50,000 acres respectively of Maasai land has been taken and put under cultivation.

Likewise, other tribal groups were motivated, through their knowledge of government policies and legal rules, to start exploiting the situation through illegal land grabbing based on political favouritism. Individuals acquired parcels in the semi-arid lands, displacing groups like the Maasai who did not know "how to play the game". Pastoralists like the Maasai, who have historically viewed the State as just and nationalistic, believed that the constitutional mandate to rule meant that the State would act to address the increasing alienation of pastoral land by outsiders, and stop this kind of land grabbing. This respect for the State and the anticipation of State intervention was unfounded, and it perpetuated, in varying magnitudes, the development of tribal conflicts over land.

The conflict between the Waarusha and the Maasai

Land encroachment by the Waarusha and their continued interest in the development of crop production on land reserved for subsistence livestock production has been a source of Maasai resentment and increasing conflict between the two groups. Their acquisition of land, especially through illegal grabbing practices, have made the Maasai sceptical and suspicious of the motives of their neighbours (the Waarusha), who pretend to be closely related to the Maasai, yet are silently, tacitly and overzealously taking away most of the pastoral grazing lands and putting it under crop cultivation. The Waarusha are using all possible channels, whether legal or illegal, to alienate and privatize lands at the

expense of the herders, thereby increasing the marginalization of the Maasai.

It is however, important to note that the kind of land grabbing and encroachment on large areas of Maasailand is not only carried out by the Waarusha. As indicated earlier, there is a great influx of various adjacent tribes into the pastoral areas. Let us consider, for example, the conversion of the agricultural villages of Matui, Songambebe, Kiperessa, Dosidosi, Engusero, Olboloti, Michiga and Sunya in Kiteto district. These have been occupied by the Warangi from Kondo, the Gogo from Mpwapwa and Kongwa and the Wazigua from Handeni. The Wapare are scattered in villages along the Ruvu river. In Monduli District, other tribes beside the Waarusha are found in Mto-wa-mbu, Makuyuni, Lolkisalie, Ngerayani and Mlimani. In Ngorongoro, there are small pockets of settlers from outside the district, in Loliondo, Endulen and Nainokunuka.

This encroachment has taken a variety of forms, ranging from land acquisition for large scale commercial crop production (50 - 3,000 acres) to small subsistence agriculture (1 - 50 acres). Large areas have been taken, creating a severe loss of what used to be good pasture land. Even the quality of the remaining areas is diminishing over time to mere wasteland. What is very controversial today is the question of title deeds given to individuals, thus developing privatization and individualization, creating subdivisions which have a far reaching impact on the pastoral herder in terms of change in the rural economy.

The title deeds, it is argued, open the door to market-based accumulation from which the indigenous Maasai is excluded. This also frustrates his mobility strategy in the operation of his rational common property management system. This has interfered with and

changed traditional forms of production, and caused the Maasai to look for alternatives to their reliance on livestock for economic subsistence.

Conflicts over land: cases and their implications

It is important to cite specific cases of conflict between the two groups in order to develop their wider implications for the unequal development of the two groups and their effect on the creation of disparities in development opportunities.

The land-associated conflict, the most critical and sensitive form of conflict between the two groups, has manifested itself in various forms. Issues associated with rights of ownership, between groups in a particular locality, village or community or between individuals and families are recurrent. The Waarusha have always been very smart, using many approaches and strategies to acquire land. In most cases, they have exploited their ethnically-based relations with the Maasai, such as reciprocity, exchange, friendship bonds, marriage bonds, grain assistance bonds, stock associations and need for agricultural labour. Nowadays they use more sophisticated approaches, like appealing to shared national identity or citizenship, common village membership and desire for political support, to appeal to Maasai to allow them to occupy a portion of land. They use both legal and illegal means to acquire land, with the aim of privatizing it through gaining title. This creates conflicts and occasional fights over the right of ownership. There are conflicts over boundaries, over who retains user rights to, over access to and over control of land.

The Maasai tend to subscribe to the ideological principle of common ownership, seeing land as collective prop-

erty. For a stranger to acquire user rights, he must strengthen the "secondary user" rights acquired through negotiation, to "primary-user" rights which are acquired by long residence and acceptance (Potkanski 1993: 22). The Waarusha use reciprocal rights previously established to acquire user rights to land they have encroached upon. This supports the strong argument given by Mukhisa Kituyi, that by far the most significant problem among the Maasai of Northern Tanzania today revolves around the question of access to and ownership of traditional land. He further elaborates that the problem has often been seen as one of immigrants from other communities, like the Waarusha, acquiring control of user and ownership rights over Maasai pastureland for cultivation. Most of the grassroots personnel interviewed by Kituyi allege that land loss is the main threat to Maasai survival (Kituyi 1992:33). On a broader scale, it has also been evident that there is a universal trend affecting African pastoral areas, which arises from the competition over land resources especially in situations where various pastoral groups are mixed together in one area. This is very true for the villages shared by Waarusha and Maasai; in Monduli for example, where immigrant groups continue to acquire more and more land, it is estimated that over the last three decades 60% of the land which used to be suitable and potential for grazing due to permanent water resources and reliable rains, has been put under intensive agricultural production.

In Monduli District, which has had the biggest influx of Waarusha immigrants, and in Simanjiro, and especially Moita, where villages are occupied by Waarusha, 40% of the population is now composed of Waarusha. The percentage of Waarusha in villages which were

once wholly Maasai include Lokisalie - 30%, Meserani Chini - 30%, Meserani juu - 60%; Arkatan - 40%, Lepurko - 40%, Lendikinya - 40%, Orkeeswa - 50%, Laishaine - 80%, Sinon-Ngarash - 70%, Mondulijuu - 40%, Engarukajuu - 40%, Engaruka Chini - 10%, Makuyuni - 50%, Mswakeni - 50%, Lerangwa - 20%, Ngereyani - 20%, Tingatinga - 10%, Olmolog - 15% and Selela - 10%. For Monduli, as a district, this implies that more than half of the villages are occupied by Waarusha. In Simanjiro district, all the villages adjacent to Arumeru are occupied by Waarusha as follows: Loiborsoit - 10%; Losunyai - 30%, Loswaki - 40%, Olchoro Nambatano - 40%; Naberera - 2%, Shambarai Sokoni - 40%, Lendanai - 15%.

A political push in 1992 and 1993 to settle a large number of the Waarusha families from Arumeru District has created heated debates at district and regional level meetings, such that it has become difficult to implement. Those who favour the plan claim that there is plenty of open land in Kiteto which can accommodate Waarusha settlement in selected areas with potential for crop production. Even before the acceptance of this plan, a large number of Waarusha have rushed to stake claims to the earmarked areas. It is reported that some of them have already secured plots in Naberera, Namalalu, Orkesumet, Ndaleta and Partimis while awaiting formal approval, pushing aside their current inhabitants.

To conclude, encroachment on grazing areas which used to be ecologically viable for livestock has forced herders to move to more arid areas. This ecological deterioration and dislocation has greatly affected the Maasai mode of production. The Maasai, who have been largely dependent on cattle as the main source of subsistence, have become more commercially

oriented. They are now forced into a kind of mixed economy where agricultural production is becoming a necessity. There is increasing involvement of the Maasai in agricultural production hand-in-hand with livestock keeping. In Monduli, a considerable number of families are practising crop production for subsistence in the following villages: Moita, Orkatami, Lokisalie, Meserani, Lupurko; Lendikinya; Sinon-Ngarash and Monduli Juu. Yet the majority of the Maasai, who do not practice crop cultivation, depend largely on the sale of their diminishing livestock to buy alternative essential foodstuffs. It is clear that the practice of agriculture undermines the ecological conditions suitable for pastoral production systems. This, in turn, has created a decline in the subsistence livestock production, affecting food security and forcing the Maasai into cultivation in which they are, technically, not well versed.

Conflict over land has generated other conflicts which have intensified the deterioration of relations between the two groups. One of these conflicts is associated with the increasing changes in the pattern of resource use, evidenced by changes in land tenure policies. According to Kituyi, there is what he called a sort of "legislative obscurity", whereby the land question in Northern Maasailand is marked by the "absence of comprehensive legislation on land administration and particularly regulation of tenure changes" (Kituyi 1992:34). He maintains that "the whole structure of traditional hierarchy in relation to land administration has crumbled and the method by which the vacuum is filled is in obscurity" (Kituyi 1992: 35). Essentially, there is no clear land allocation authority, whether through customary power or legislative institutions. From the village level to the national level, it is unclear who has the

power and the authority to issue land. This ambiguity has heightened the conflict between the traditional claims of pastoralists and the demands for land put forward by others.

This has led the Waarusha to deliberately compete and stand for all political positions in party and government structures, from the village level to the regional and national levels. Their aim is to acquire a monopoly of decision-making powers and authority to safeguard their interests and enable them to have more control on land matters. This leverage for acquisition and allocation of land has resulted in competition over power and status between the two groups. The legitimate power and authority of the Maasai in the villages they share with the Waarusha, and even at the district level, as in Monduli, is slowly eroding. The issue of political representation has become highly sensitive between the two groups. The Maasai leadership perceives a kind of status reversal in many arenas, ranging from political representation and educational attainment to economic status. This makes the Maasai at best to be very nervous and frustrated, and leads to a kind of social-psychological reaction of hatred and feelings of intimidation. The frustration and disappointment over their loss of political power has been intensifying over time. This is contradictory to the well-known historical position of the Maasai, as a powerful, wealthy and proud people, both feared and respected by most of the tribes around them. Today the Maasai are virtually powerless politically, and cannot effectively operate at any given level to either defend themselves or advocate for their interests and needs.

The Maasai have tended to be in a subordinate position versus the Waarusha. For example, in Monduli district, in the villages which are shared

by the two tribes, there is great tension over the issue of political representation, and in most of the elections, cases of appeals and riggings are obvious. There have been conflicts and disputes during elections in Engaruka Chini, Sinon Ngarash, Meserani, Lendikinya, Monduli Juu and Moita in Monduli district.

Strategies of intervention

The approach which can be taken to recovering the Maasai position and to developing the Maasai as a pastoral group has changed enormously over time. The role and the capacity of the state to initiate and undertake widespread programmes for the development of ethnic groups is becoming very limited.

It is possible that the downfall of the Maasai today is not directly associated with ethnic conflict, but with their inability to act politically as a group through existing political and administrative structures. It is true that for a long time now they have been in a weak position, little able to fight for their own interests and guide their own development. It seems that as a group, they are demoralized and disorganized. This has inevitably created frustration and withdrawal from arenas of power, which in turn has led to a collective feeling of psychological neglect and intimidation when dealing with various levels of authority and with other groups such as the Waarusha. If asked who is at fault, it is certain that they will blame the system, the state, the politicians, the policy makers, the civil servants or their own village leaders. Moreover, they will soon, in certain situations, start blaming themselves.

The only way out is for the Maasai to confront what is going on and face the challenges posed by the situation today. They must learn to identify their prob-

lems and work for solutions. It is obvious they need the support of the government in the form of deliberate policy intervention and assistance in order to identify their needs and be motivated to fulfil them.

There is ample literature, including Massaro, Kituyi and many others, proposing possible interventions for the development of the Maasai of Northern Tanzania. Both Massaro and Kituyi have tended to emphasize the use of the empowerment paradigm for local participatory development (Massaro, 1989:92; Kituyi 1992:45). This approach focuses on the people-centred, bottom-up philosophy of development. As noted by Kituyi, one of the failures of Maasai development is that the local people have been relegated to a passive role, and this has contributed to failure of a number of projects. The above-mentioned approach enables people to identify the aspects of their lives that they wish to change, critically assess the relevant problems and their root causes, and then set and act upon achievable goals. The role of the development agent is to facilitate a genuine dialogue and mutual learning process.

The empowerment approach involves the whole community in the process of radical transformation, building team spirit and the collective will to change. The empowerment goal, however, is different from the participatory models in that there is sharing of collective power which makes people agents of social action (Massaro 1989:99). The above approach, in the context of the conflict between the Maasai and the Waarusha, calls for awareness and empowerment building among the ordinary people, which will engender shifts in political, economic and social relations, widening the space within which the forces for change and development play out their respective roles.

Kituyi, on the other hand, has suggested a kind of advocacy and grassroots empowerment intervention by the local grassroots organizations. This has started to emerge in Maasailand and is crucial to immediately solve the pastoral problem of land and food security (Kituyi 1992:45). He further argues that the advocacy role can contribute to institutional development and provide a kind of pressure group to expose and fight for pastoral land rights. Another problem which needs to be considered in assessing the viability of development is rooted in transforming the leadership and in democratization through popular participation. At this moment, we need to ask whether grassroots groups, mutual associations, support groups and more non-governmental initiatives offer any opportunity for development. At issue is how to improve their quality and mobilise them as important resources for creative solutions, through participatory development. The strategy, therefore, calls for empowerment and awareness-raising, so that people realise it is their duty to liberate themselves and create a healthy political, social and economic climate. For example, there is a need for a policy which empowers the village leadership to pass and enforce bylaws, to create land-use plans, to allocate land and to enter into contractual agreements with the outsiders regarding the use of resources. This will enable the Maasai to control the influx of immigrant farmers like the Waarusha, and help stop the acquisition and appropriation of resources by outsiders which is undermining Maasai society.

Another important intervention strategy which correlates with the empowerment approach is policy reform. In view of the changing political and economic realities it is essential that the land tenure policy be reviewed. This

must be supported by a number of other policies and changes, for example those concerning livestock and agriculture, settlement, natural resources, land use planning and wildlife.

Regarding land tenure, specific issues that need immediate action include the following:

(i) A well-established policy on spontaneous settlement, which must be supported by stern government regulations. This will control the kind of unplanned immigration of outsiders, like the Waarusha, seeking acquisition of land.

It is obvious the Maasai are overly eager to stop such outsiders. This eagerness has translated into a number of interventions, like the titling of the village lands in order to control land allocation, a deliberate move to restrict land access to outsiders. It has been reported that more than 60% of all the villages in Maasailand have acquired title deeds.

(ii) The immediate adjustment of legal procedures for land acquisition. This will make sure the state legislature laws do not bypass and violate the customary land ownership which is the source of ownership of most pastoral land. In many villages, you find a situation where illegal sub-leasing is practised.

(iii) The formulation of a land tenure policy which gives equal priority and emphasis to the development of agriculture and livestock production as major sources of the national economic food production.

The successful expansion of both commercial and subsistence agriculture undermines the development of the needed livestock subsistence production to a great extent. Commercial agriculture undermines even the local subsistence agriculture, pushing it to more marginal areas. The same expansion

and support has disorganized the pastoral economic production pattern. It disturbs the ecologically viable grazing pattern and access to sources of water. This is true of areas in Lokisalie, Moita in Monduli District and Naberera area in Simanjiro District. It is possible, however, that the large-scale commercial agriculture already in operation is irreversible, as it has already been legalized. Thus, the only intervention possible is for local authorities and representatives to have the power and authority to control further expansion in the arid areas, since commercial agriculture works contrary to the goals of subsistence agriculture and pastoralism.

(iv) The vast intrusion of subsistence agriculture into the more semi-arid rangelands is an irreversible phenomena. The only solution to be taken is to control undue expansion. It is possible that subsistence agriculture and livestock production can be substantially coordinated using well designed land use management plans. This calls for immediate intervention at the local level to prepare viable land use plans in the villages, which address the parallel needs of the two production systems. This will provide the basis for agreement between the Waarusha and the Maasai for realizing the potential of the land resources at their disposal, diffusing the economic conflict which leads to inter-ethnic tensions. With such an approach, tribalism in the political arena at this time of democratization and political liberalization might be avoided. The same land use plan will accommodate those Maasai who have taken up subsistence crop cultivation as an alternative source of food and cash for other uses.

Nevertheless, the most essential intervention needed for the development of these people is the establishment of an effective formal and informal educa-

tion programme which will train both the children and the adults through their hearts, heads and hands. This education must be based on indigenous needs, to develop the capacity for people to become their own masters, capable of overcoming the variety of challenges inherent in their present community life.

Conclusion

The major problem facing the Maasai today and impeding their development is the continued reduction of available resources per capita and the resultant degradation of the environment. This has created ecological deterioration and dislocation which has greatly affected their mode of production and their management strategies and techniques.

This deterioration is largely the result of the increasing acquisition of land by outsiders. The main conflict between the Waarusha and the Maasai, who seem to be closely related as neighbours, is the continual immigration of the Waarusha, who appropriate good land and put it under cultivation.

The Maasai leaders are of the opinion that the conflict stems from the intention of outsiders to remove them from their primary ownership of land and scatter them in camps in more fragile arid areas which lack year-round water.

It is interesting, however, to note that the conflict has evolved so it can no longer be dealt with through short term solutions. Some of the problems inherent in the conflict are irreversible; the only solution is to stop the problems from multiplying. It should be the role of the state to intervene by elaborating policy changes in support of the livestock keepers. For unless policies are altered, the development of pastoralist

groups like the Maasai will continue to be frustrated, leading to a kind of political, social and economic nightmare for them. At this moment, the Maasai are increasingly worried about their future. With frustration, they are watching their fate. A number of factors which indicate a steady decline in their way of life can be observed: they are becoming poor, suffering increasing losses of the animals needed to support family subsistence. The average number of cattle needed for household subsistence is about 12 milk cows. Nowadays, the average holdings are about 2.1 in Monduli and about 4.5 in Simanjiro district, far below what is needed.

It is obvious that policy reforms are very necessary, yet these reforms without concurrent changes in the underlying social and political realities are unlikely to bring a solution to the plight of the Maasai. It is encouraging to see that pastoralists themselves, with the support of local NGO's, are pursuing programmes for positive development.

Lastly, political representation should be viewed as a very sensitive and crucial area for ensuring that empowerment and lobbying opportunities are created for the (now) minority tribes like the Maasai. Through representation they will be able to voice their demands and push for rightful action to be taken by the authorities, from the grassroots level to the top, against the misconceived policy actions and neglect which are now operating against them.

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