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How the Formal Education System in Kenya is Changing the
Culture of the Maasai Community

By: Jennifer Coles

Geography and History, Queen's University, 2005

Thesis
Submitted to the Department of Geography and Environmental Studies
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Arts
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2008

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Abstract

Colonialism brought Africa into the sphere of European dominance and laid the ground work for the adoption of neoliberal globalization. This has affected change for the Maasai of southern Kenya who had attempted to remain isolated for much of the 19th and 20th centuries. However, such cultural isolation has been disrupted by global tourism and the desire of western citizens to view and participate in ‘authentic’ experiences in unique Maasai environments; thus creating a global desire to visit the Maasai Mara National Reserve (MMNR). The MMNR is part of *Maasailand* and has exposed many in the surrounding communities to new western ideas and ideals. This exposure, along side the increasing role of supranational organizations such as the United Nations, has created a desire and demand within the Maasai community to participate in education, which in turn has taught some of the Maasai how to become ‘good western’ citizens. Other supranational organizations such as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund have created contradictions in the development process by limiting the amount spent on formal education. This means that students in rural schools, such as the Maasai, are forced to endure a lower quality of education, which does not provide the tools needed to engage in the modern economy.

Maasai children are attending school at higher rates than ever before; forcing change in their community and culture. These include changes in appearance, housing materials, diet, attitudes and more. Since the Maasai culture is not compatible with the formal education system of Kenya, and the education system does not have any leniency to deal with this conflict; children are being forced at a young age to choose between formal and traditional learning. Using a conceptual framework of globalization, these

changes are further understood by the use of Pierre Bourdieu's work on social capital.

The main purpose of this thesis is to demonstrate how the Maasai community is adapting to these changes in an effort to give its youth a strong foundation of modern education supplemented by the strength of its cultural traditions.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The purpose of this thesis is to understand the effects the formal education system in Kenya is having on the culture of the Maasai community¹, while demonstrating that the Maasai are capable of creating a hybrid society; one combining modernity with cultural traditions, in a movement towards self preservation and growth. The importance of this knowledge is critical as globalization is altering the Maasai community necessitating adaptation at a local level to protect and maintain local culture and local knowledge. The identity of the Maasai can be examined through spatial organization and how cultural change affects the spatial order of the community. Through colonialism and neoliberal globalization, western hegemonic powers have influenced Kenya's education system, and this has caused a rift in both the opinion of community members and in the physical delivery of the traditional practices of the Maasai.

This thesis explores the effects of two different types of globalization on the Maasai of Kenya. From a historical lens colonialism marks the incorporation of Kenya and other African nations into Europe's global sphere. The period of colonialism began in the 19th century and came about through European technological advances and interests in the expansion of empire. As Potter points out, this phase of globalization is different from the globalization of today, as the empires were imposing a whole new political system, and not just a new financial structure.

Colonialism is a political process, and the establishment of colonies long predates the genesis and subsequent globalisation of European capitalism. Right through this period, colonies were acquired for motives other than the economic imperatives for material resources, labour or markets.
Potter, 1999, p. 25.

¹ The term community is used instead of tribe, as tribe is usually taken as derogatory in Kenya, especially by the Maasai. In this sense it refers to the ethnic group of the Maasai, not a village or specific region, even though the Maasai who participate in this study live close together.

Kenya became a British protectorate in 1885 and was reinvented as a ‘white man’s country’ and colony in 1901. This meant that instead of Kenya becoming a satellite country like many colonies, the British government began to settle the space with British citizens and imposed an alien organizational system on this newly formed colony.

Communities established by the indigenous population across the country, and in existence for hundreds of years, were relocated by the colonial government in order to make land available for the incoming British citizens. The Maasai lost their fertile grazing lands in a series of land treaties from 1904 to 1911 and moved south to more marginal areas. The settlers established their new homesteads on the most productive lands but needed cheap labour to clear and cultivate it. The colonial government introduced hut taxes in the early 1900s, which forced all male Kenyans to pay a tax on their huts (Ashene, 2000). As the cash economy was not yet established throughout Kenya, many Kenyans were forced to become labourers for the settlers, in order to gain the income to pay these new taxes. The establishment of hut taxes and other political systems forced Kenyans to become involved in the newly created colony, which included the cash economy, and thus they began to be incorporated into the larger sphere of the British Empire. Another avenue of incorporation has been education.

Originally, education for Kenyans was provided by missionaries and was then incorporated into the colonial government’s policies, but only to the extent that it benefited the empire. Kenyans were allowed to take classes only in segregated schools that would enable them to become low level government officials, such as translators and

‘chiefs’² and to work for the white settlers on their farms. The education system was provided exclusively for the benefit of the colonial government and was organized and carried out by British missionaries. The focus for missionaries was to introduce Christianity and more specifically, Protestantism. In order to learn about God and Christ, Kenyans were taught English and how to read religious texts. During the early years of colonization, the main goal of the missionaries was to educate and convert the ‘savages’ to Christianity. “The missionaries failed to differentiate Christian ethics from the European way of life. To them, becoming a Christian generally meant negation of the traditional African way of life” (Sheffield, 1973, p. 11). Kenyans of different ethnic origin were taught that their religious and social beliefs were wrong and that without believing in Christianity and God, they would go straight to hell (Sheffield, 1973, pp. 10-12). This obviously had profound implications for the local population which was caught between the new white way of life and their old ways that had been around for centuries.

The colonial era came to an abrupt end following World War II, with Kenya gaining independence. The newly independent government’s main focus was to integrate its diverse communities, develop new industries, strengthen old industries and educate the masses. This was a huge challenge as the government not only wanted the country to become strong and economically independent but government officials were being inundated with information from the global sphere, which forced development along western lines. This is a main aspect of present globalization as western powers, and specifically first Britain and then the United States of America, were fostering an

² Chiefs are not part of all Kenyan communities’ traditional government system; however, the colonial government determined that this was one of the best ways to govern its colony through the elicitation of help from community members. This created division in many communities that has persisted to this day (Stock, 2004, pp. 122-123).

economic environment that would ensure for their continued dominance. The United States replaced Britain as the hegemonic power at the turn of the 20th century, a reign that continues to this day. Through supranational organizations, such as the United Nations (UN), World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF) and The General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT)³, the United States was able to maintain its influence on the newly independent countries. Kenya joined the UN in 1963 and the World Bank and IMF, and signed the GATT in 1964. These organizations fostered the ideals of the United States and other western powers and helped maintain open channels for international trade, thus beginning the process that has become the neoliberal globalization regime of today (O'Loughlin, Staeheli and Greenberg, 2004, p. 10 and Flint, 2004, p. 364).

Despite similar outcomes, the main difference between colonial globalization and neoliberal globalization is that the underlying mode is different. As was stated previously, colonial globalization was a political process which brought about local change and enormous economic benefits for the empire, whereas neoliberal globalization is about reorganizing structures in an attempt to secure access to markets and resources by other countries and corporations (Flint, 2004, pp. 364-365). The previous supranational organizations have helped solidify this control by ensuring that countries that belong to these organizations obey the rules dictated by Western hegemonic powers⁴. Participation in these organizations has created a global environment that is open for trade, exchange of ideas and new technologies. This exchange of social and cultural ideals is heavily influenced by the hegemonic powers and has led many people to demand the consumer

³ GATT later became the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 1995.

⁴ Although I believe that hegemonic powers have a great influence on the rest of the world, I also believe that countries like Kenya are independent and have the ability to accept and reject any new idea. That being said, organizations like the World Bank, IMF and WTO do make independent economic decisions very difficult for developing countries, as they have the ability to remove financial support from specific countries.

culture of the U.S, which creates countries and communities that have become good ‘western citizens’. “These shifts have been accompanied by a well constructed and widely disseminated doctrine that they are to be welcomed, represent advancement and possibility, and that to express scepticism or opposition is to mark one out at least as regressive.” (Caragata, 1998, p. 224).

Supranational organizations have helped shape the past and current education system in Kenya, which the Kenyan government has used to shape its citizens. Most governments, including Kenya’s, use their education system to establish and promote change in their population. The main goal of the formal education system in Kenya is to encourage development and promote social inclusion among the diverse communities living in Kenya (Ominde Report, 1964, p. 25).

The United Nations has influenced the development of the education system by including it in the declaration of human rights and by promoting global ideas such as equality, inclusion and social justice, while the World Bank and IMF have influenced the system by forcing the government to spend less on education and other social services, seeing education as a cost, not an investment. This is done because neoliberalism tends to demand governments to:

reduce taxes and social welfare expenditures that diminish corporate profits, discourage investment, and therefore threaten economic growth and international competitiveness. Social services burden business through the distortion of labor markets and higher taxes. If governments borrow to pay for these services, the higher real interest rates that result from this borrowing further depress investment. In short, the efficiency approach posits that economic openness places important constraints on welfare spending, leaving governments little choice but to restrict their social outlays. (Avelmo, Brown and Hunter, 2004, pp. 211 -212).

For Kenya, this has resulted in fewer teachers, lower salaries for teachers, fewer physical structures and fewer teaching resources such as textbooks and chalk and the transfer of these expenses onto the families that utilize these resources (Akala, 2002).

The structural ideas and actions imposed by supranational organizations have affected all aspects of Kenyan society including the Maasai. Despite the Maasai being labelled as an isolated society for most of the 20th century, they have been influenced by the effects of globalization. The Maasai along with all other communities in Kenya are taught the same curriculum; however, the Maasai and other communities from rural areas are forced to accept a lower quality of education because of the disparities that exist between the urban and rural areas, thus allowing urban areas to develop at an accelerated rate relative to the rural. The urban-rural divide is exacerbated by the local, regional and national inconsistencies of development that restrain access to the goods and tools that schools are encouraged to introduce to their students by supranational organizations.

The introduction of globalizing influences such as hut taxes, land treaties, formal education, influential supranational organizations and others that will be addressed in succeeding sections, have all profoundly altered the world and affected change on Kenya and the Maasai. These ideas and organizations have modified the Maasai way of life and in some way have challenged the community to become a more open society, exposed to external pressures. All of these play a large factor in the changing lifestyle of people in Kenya; however, for the purpose of this study the formal education system in Kenya is the focus of analysis to gauge the effects it is having on the Maasai community and its lifestyle.

The Maasai live in an area that is a unique ecosystem. The footprint of this community is relatively light in comparison to other communities and industries that

might otherwise inhabit this area. Although the Narok District, which is the study site for this thesis, has been and continues to be fairly isolated from the rest of the world, it is becoming more and more integrated into the global sphere. It is useful to view changes in the Maasai community through the lens of education, since the formal education system in Kenya is one of the main conduits for the dissemination of neoliberal ideals.

Education changes people's lives. It creates knowledge and permits people who participate in it a chance at a different life. It creates a new psychological space that people function in because of their access to different types of knowledge (Catedra, 1990, pp. 56-58; Caragata, 1998, p. 215). As communities such as the Maasai interact with education new cultures are formed. Culture is a shared experience for the community and each individual adds something to it (Bjorklund, 1990, pp. 65-67). As outside influences like the formal education system in Kenya have become part of the daily lives of many in the Maasai community, new knowledge is shifting their shared culture once again. With access to education the Maasai are creating a different kind of cultured space, which is having an impact on their physical environment

The westernized formal education system in Kenya, as with many other social networks, is informed by neoliberal globalization, as the system is designed to produce good 'western citizens' who are capable of producing and consuming the material products that are manufactured (Flint, 2004, pp. 364-365). The education system is thereby at the heart of the changing culture for the Maasai community.

Chapter 2: The History of Neoliberalism and related changes in the Field of Power

I. Introduction

Understanding neoliberal globalization is central to the argument of this thesis, since economic policies at both the global and regional scale are affecting Kenya and the Maasai community. Economic policies manifest themselves in different ways and have forced developing countries to mould their citizens in line with western hegemonic ideals. In order to understand these changes, a global perspective must first be established.

II. The History of Neoliberalism

After World War II, in an attempt to stabilize the global economy and to prevent further wars, countries around the world began to adopt a Keynesian economic philosophy that created the welfare state (Harvey, 2005). The dominant economic philosophy of the time dictated that

[a] ‘class compromise’ between capital and labour was generally advocated as the key guarantor of domestic peace and tranquility. States actively intervened in industrial policy and moved to set standards for the social wage by constructing a variety of welfare systems (health care, education, and the like) (Harvey, 2005, pp. 10-11).

A Keynesian economic strategy dictates constant and continuous intervention by the state in order to ensure the stability of the economy and thus the continued stability of the entire social fabric of the nation.

The adoption of a Keynesian economic approach created strength and stability during the high growth years after the Second World War; however, by the end of the 1960s, this approach began to break down both internationally and within domestic markets (Harvey, 2006, p14). When Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan came to

power in 1979 and 1980 neoliberalism was institutionalized⁵. Both political leaders received economic inspiration from think-tanks in Britain and the United States (Peck and Tickell, 2007, p. 36). These think-tanks were instrumental in the establishment of neoliberalism and convinced Thatcher and Reagan to implement neoliberal policies as their foundation for economic policy. Both leaders were faced with different economic problems and implemented their new policies in different ways. However, their main focus was the same; to remove government regulation from the economy. Thatcher and Reagan fought and won wars at home with unions, and began to restructure the economy, greatly reducing the role of the state in the economy. Programs initiated by the previous welfare states were cut out and instead, privatization and deregulation of state owned companies began.

Neoliberalism was able to spread throughout the world because of several events. In the early-1970s, OPEC hiked the price of oil thereby creating considerable financial power for oil producing countries like Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Abu Dhabi. Under pressure from the United States Saudi Arabia agreed to recycle all of their petrodollars through the New York investment banks” (Harvey, 2006, p. 21). This allowed New York investment banks to become even more internationally involved than before, as they had access to huge amounts of money from Saudi Arabia. “Hungry for credit, developing countries were encouraged to borrow heavily, though at rates that were advantageous to the New York bankers” (Harvey, 2005, p. 29). This lending frenzy was accomplished after liberalizing the international credit and financial markets. In 1982-84, the first test of

⁵ The Americans, led by the CIA and US Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger, in an attempt to reverse the socialist tendencies in Chile, staged a coup in 1973, removing the democratically elected President, Salvador Allende from power and replacing him with a leader who was inclined towards American policies. This was the first experiment of neoliberalism as an economic philosophy and it encouraged growth for the first couple of years (Harvey, 2005, pp. 7-9).

the newly neoliberalized global economy came from Mexico, whose government was forced into defaulting payments. “The Reagan administration, which had seriously thought of withdrawing support for the IMF in its first year in office, found a way to put together the powers of the US Treasury and the IMF to resolve the difficulty by rolling over the debt, but did so in return for neoliberal reforms” (Harvey, 2005, p. 29). And thus, structural adjustment programs (SAPs) began.

The IMF and the World Bank thereafter [after Mexico defaulted] became centres for the propagation and enforcement of ‘free market fundamentalism’ and neoliberal orthodoxy. In return for debt rescheduling, indebted countries were required to implement institutional reforms, such as cuts in welfare expenditures, more flexible labour market laws, and privatization (Harvey, 2005, p. 29).

Structural Adjustment Programs usher neoliberal economic reforms into independent countries. In order to receive loans from the World Bank and IMF, developing countries are forced to liberalize their economies. This is the difference between SAPs and neoliberalism. SAPs are programs that restructure the government’s involvement in its economy, which is one of the main components of neoliberalism. This means that SAPs are a function of neoliberalism as they are the conduits for changing countries into neoliberal states.

III. The Neoliberal State

i. The Theoretical Approach

Neoliberalism dictates the complete removal of the state from the economy unless it is to create a business environment that is conducive to its needs. This is quite unlike the previous welfare state that prioritized the needs of its citizens first.

According to theory, the neoliberal state should favour strong individual private property rights, the rule of law, and the institutions of freely functioning markets and free trade. These are the institutional arrangements considered essential to guarantee individual freedoms. The legal framework is

that of freely negotiated contractual obligations between juridical individuals in the marketplace. The sanctity of contracts and the individual rights to freedom of action, expression, and choice must be protected. The state must therefore use its monopoly of the means of violence to preserve these freedoms at all costs. By extension, the freedom of businesses and corporations (legally regarded as individuals) to operate within this institutional framework of free markets and free trade is regarded as a fundamental good. (Harvey, 2005, p. 64).

Harvey continues to say that

Neoliberals are particularly assiduous in seeking the privatization of assets. The absence of clear private property rights – as in many developing countries – is seen as one of the greatest of all institutional barriers to economic development and the improvement of human welfare. Enclosure and the assignment of private property rights is considered the best way to protect against the so-called ‘tragedy of the commons’ (the tendency for individuals to irresponsibly super-exploit common property resources such as land and water) (2005, p. 65).

The goal was to achieve better living standards and an overall increase of national wealth through the privatization and deregulation of the economy, which allows for increased competition. Increased competition creates a more efficient and productive economy that improves quality and reduces costs to the consumer through cheaper commodities and indirectly through the reduction of the tax burden (Harvey, 2005, p. 65). Thus unlike the welfare state of the previous decades, the neoliberal state holds individual freedom (for citizens and businesses) as an absolute right. Successes and failures of an individual are the responsibility of the individual and no one else.

ii. The Practice of Neoliberalism

As with many theories that are moulded into politics, the practice is often not entirely like the theory. The notion of free trade, which is fundamental to the theory of neoliberalism, is not enacted throughout the globe. For instance, tariffs, quotas and other impediments to trade are often utilized by developed countries. European and American governments, despite their claim to being neoliberal states, still subsidize their farmers,

creating an unfair advantage for these countries. President Bush imposes tariffs on steel manufacturing, in order to gain votes in Ohio, while he advocates for free markets and free trade between countries.

In his books on neoliberalism, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* (2005) and *Spaces of Global Capitalism* (2006), David Harvey demonstrates how the practice of neoliberalism is to create class power and bring the control back to the elites, instead of the citizens of the welfare state. This does not mean bringing power back to the same individuals as before. For instance, class power came to those in England who were working in the business world, not to the nobles of the past. However, it still created a class distinction that allowed those with the abilities to live in the modern neoliberal world to flourish. These groups of people have become rich and powerful, and have influenced the economic functioning of the world. From a global perspective, a class of countries was created who make and break the rules, while other countries are forced to obey at all costs.

IV. Neoliberalism of Today

Neoliberalism in today's society consists of classes of citizens and countries who make the rules and control the business world. Supranational institutions or organizations like the World Bank, IMF and United Nations, have absorbed neoliberal ideals from the United States and United Kingdom. This has been termed the 'Washington Consensus.'

The effect was to define the US and UK models of neo-liberalism as the answer to global problems and thereby put considerable pressure even on Japan and Europe (to say nothing of the rest of the world) to take the neo-liberal road... The formation of the WTO was the high point of institutional reform on the world state. Programmatically, the WTO set neo-liberal standards and rules for interaction in the global economy. Its primary objective, however, was to open up as much of the world as possible to unhindered capital flow (though always with the caveat clause of protection of key 'national interests'), for this was the foundation of the capacity of the

US financial power as well as that of Europe and Japan, to exact tribute from the rest of the world (Harvey, 2006, p. 33).

This is the present situation of the global economy today. Several developed countries (and within these countries an elite population or dominant culture) control the financial markets through domination of supranational organizations. The goal of such elites is to open up new regions for growth, extract resources or create markets for their mass produced commodities in order to further enrich themselves. The dominance of this group is considerable. The elite countries have the ability to transform the economic reforms of developing countries that are forced to practice the theory of neoliberalism, rather than the practices followed in the developed world. Kenya has been forced to live by the theory of neoliberalism which has resulted in dramatic changes to the way the country is run. The stringent rule of free market capitalism, which is dictated by neoliberalism, has created a disastrous environment for the budgets of social services. Education and other social services have taken a backseat to other developmental ideas that are decreasing the chances of many Kenyans, including the Maasai, to prosper.

V. Change in a field of power: how neoliberalism relates to the Maasai Community

A field, as defined by the late French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, is “a competitive system of social relations which functions according to its own specific logic or rules. ‘A field,’ Bourdieu writes, ‘is a space in which a game takes place, a field of objective relations between individuals or institutions who are competing for the same stake.’” (Bourdieu quoted in Moi, 1991, pp. 1020-1021). The previous economic field was that of Keynesianism or the welfare state, which was then replaced by the neoliberal system of present day.

Bourdieu believed that neoliberalism was an alien economic system that was imposed on France and the rest of the world by the hegemonic dominance of the United States. He relates this process of neoliberal dominance to that of colonization, the United States is the colonizer and the rest of the world is the colonized.

According to Bourdieu, the attempt to apply neo-liberal solutions to economies throughout the world represented an attempt to impose as universal an economic model which had its roots in the particular cultural and political traditions of the US. In this context he pointed to what he saw as a typically American emphasis on self-reliance and self-help rooted in Protestantism, which had fostered the ideology of the 'self-made man' flourishing in a 'land of opportunity' and hence encouraged both a weak centralized state and a tendency to take the market to be the primary measure of all worth... Thus Bourdieu concluded, 'what is universally proposed and imposed as the norm for every rational economic practice is in reality the universalisation of the particular characteristics of an economy embedded in a particular history and social structure, that of the United States' (2001: 98 [87])." (Bourdieu 2001: 98 [87] quoted in Lane, 2006, p. 12).

As the United States has become the hegemonic ruler or dominant culture of the world, its imposition of neoliberalism as an economic system has infiltrated most countries of the world, including Kenya. Kenya belongs to supranational organizations, including the World Bank, IMF, UN and WTO and is also a substantial debtor country. This means that the nation now faces the cultural domination of the United States as the United States' economic and cultural domination of supranational organizations forces member countries, including Kenya, to follow the guidelines or face the consequences. As noted by Harvey the United States is the world's hegemonic leader but within each country a class develops that becomes the hegemonic ruler or dominant class, and reproduces the dominant culture within that country. The hegemonic class or dominant culture in Kenya, like most countries that adhere to these rules, abides by principles similar to those of the US. This class imposes neoliberalism on the country by promoting western hegemonic ideals of citizenship practice.

Neoliberal ideas are significantly changing the cultural landscapes and identity of the Maasai community and can be further understood with the help of one of Pierre Bourdieu's main concepts, that of capital. Bourdieu defined capital as cultural, social and economic. "Cultural capital is said to exist in three states: 'institutionalized' by the academic qualification, 'embodied' in the attributes and characteristics of the person and 'objectified' in material artefacts' (Waters, 2006, p. 180). "Social capital is found in the networks and connections that can be mobilized to generate advantages or benefits' (Kelly and Lusi, 2006, p. 834) and finally, "[e]conomic capital refers to the assets and financial worth of an individual which are 'immediately and directly convertible into money and may be institutionalized in the form of property rights'" (Bourdieu quoted in Kelly and Lusi, 2006, p. 833). These three ideas that make up capital, allow us to view the changes happening in the Maasai community since they relate to how a Maasai student may change as their interaction with education continues.

Kenya's elite reproduce neoliberalism through the formal education system in a variety of different ways. However, the main component of this can be seen from the Kenyan government's vision for education. "This makes the purpose of our education and training focus on the development of an individual's personality to enable her or him to fit into society as a productive and civil individual. Education and training, therefore, seeks to offer equal opportunity to all learners" (Ministry Of Education, Science and Technology, 2004, p. 23). In another section of the same report, the government clarifies its vision, it "is guided by the understanding that quality education and training contributes significantly to economic growth and the expansion of employment opportunities" (Ibid, p. 12). These two quotations demonstrate how the main role of the formal education system is envisioned as one that strengthens the economy. This means

that Maasai students are transforming their traditional capital into a form of capital more readily available to the formal market economy. This strengthens the Kenyan economy but also facilitates its further incorporation into neoliberal markets.

“The function of the educational system, Bourdieu argues, is above all to produce the necessary social belief in the legitimacy of currently dominant power structures...” (Moi, 1991, p. 1023). This enables us to consider the change in the field of power from Keynesianism to neoliberalism as changing the way in which the education system operates and the ideals that are taught in countries around the world, including Kenya.

Education changes lives. It can create a different knowledge and a different lifestyle for a person if he or she chooses to progress through the system. Education opens doors. It offers people the chance of success and a chance at a different life if they choose to walk through that door.

The threshold marks and prepares the passing, it is the place where limits open, and it is the subject of a great number of physical and symbolic rituals. Some thresholds mark property limits and others the most intimate places in a home. There are specific cultural rules about who may cross a threshold and under what circumstances. The stage may be the same but it is not the way the threshold is to be signified, perceived or interpreted. Positions are always relative; the very threshold is itself a mediator, linking spaces. (Catedra, 1990, p. 56).

The person who crosses a boundary is physically and symbolically in a special situation: he is between two worlds. (Catedra, 1990, pp. 57).

Moving between these different ‘worlds’ is problematic for the Maasai.

Primary level education in the Maasai culture is becoming more common; however, higher levels of education are still relatively rare for Maasai students. Education offers the possibility for a bright future but for the Maasai community this does not necessarily hold true. Many children proceed through the formal education system in the

hope of a successful graduation and advancement into the professional world but the poor quality of rural schools in Kenya has trapped students between two worlds. They are no longer traditionalists, nor are they modernists, they have curiosity and have been exposed to new ideas, but they do not have the skills to achieve their desires.

Education is creating cultural change in the Maasai community because “[c]ulture is the ongoing outcome of organized experience” (Bjorklund, 1990, p. 65) “As learning occurs or is ignored, information is ordered or reordered, applied or misapplied, judged or misjudged by individuals, and other people in the environment, the outcome becomes part of a culture.” (Bjorklund, 1990, p. 67).

The output of [this] process is our individual and collective behavior, the artefacts and infrastructures within which it functions, and the communication and other forms of interaction that occur. The interactive output from the behavioural processes constitutes culture as a dynamic cognitive-linguistic process which transform environment into culture space. Culture space is the ongoing outcome of people sharing a territory and infrastructures, faced with the problems of maintaining themselves in that place in relation to their own dynamic beliefs and intentions, and their dynamic relations with other people beyond. The timespatial configurations resulting from social-cultural interactions of individuals and groups becomes the social-cultural environment (output) within a physical environment. (Bjorklund, 1990, p. 67).

The formal education system in Kenya is becoming more widely used, especially by the Maasai. Through the teachings of neoliberal ideas from the dominant culture in Kenya, the education system is exposing Maasai children to new ideas of westernization, which is changing them. These students are changing their interactions with the physical and social landscape and in turn, they are changing their community’s shared culture and the way that they view and interact with their landscapes.

The main focus of this thesis is how the formal education system is changing the culture of the Maasai community. Applying this conceptual framework of

neoliberalization allows us to view the cultural changes of the Maasai community as submitting to the hegemonic culture of the world. Maasai students are attending school and are being introduced to new western ideals, which has created an environment of change. Examples of this change include; parental desire for children to become educated, which is a function of cultural capital (more specifically that of institutional capital); changing attitudes regarding education, which can be seen as embodied capital; changes in dress, nutrition and hygiene and housing, which is objectified capital; role models aiding new graduates in navigating the modern economy, which is social capital; and the desire for 'modern' sector jobs, which is the desire for economic capital.

As Maasai students begin to utilize the formal education system of Kenya, they are becoming more entrenched in the ideals of the hegemonic culture of the world. The change in the field of power from Keynesianism to that of neoliberalization has affected this community in several ways, but clearly one of these is the education system.

Chapter 3: Background

I. Introduction

In order to understand the changes that are occurring in the Maasai community because of increased access to education, it is important to understand the traditional lifestyle of the community. The history, culture, environmental issues, and economic overview of the community are all important factors that demonstrate the continual evolution of the Maasai community in response to various manifestations of formal education from missionary, to colonial, to modern day.

II. History

The Maasai are *Nilotic* speakers who originated in Northern Africa and migrated south to Kenya and Tanzania between the 14th and 16th centuries (Rukwaro and Mukono, 2001, p. 81). For hundreds of years, the Maasai lived with the natural cycles of the environment. During periods of drought, their livestock numbers fell, during times of prosperity, they built their livestock numbers up again. They were and in many ways still are custodians of the land and of their livestock. In Maasai folklore it has been said, that *Engai* (God) asked the Maasai to take care of all of the world's livestock (Spencer, 2003). Furthermore, the knowledge and understanding of their environment allows the Maasai to utilize their lands without harm. They try to never overgraze, and allow ample lag time for rejuvenation before they re-utilize an area.

The history of Kenya must inevitably consider the implications of colonialism and the affects of the British colonial government on the Maasai of Kenya. Upon arrival, the British Crown took over much of the land that previously had been occupied by different ethnic groups, including the Maasai. Between 1904 and 1911 the Maasai and the British

colonial government signed several controversial treaty agreements⁶, which ceded much of the Maasai's land to the government. This forced the Maasai to relocate to a single reserve south of the Mombassa-Uganda railroad, which passed through Nairobi. Before colonial times, the Maasai inhabited about 155 000 square kilometres of land, which by 1913, was reduced to approximately 40 000 square kilometres of land (Fratkin, 2001, pp. 11-12 and Kimani and Pickard, 1998, p.204). The Maasai's history is continually about the loss of their traditional grazing lands, and could be interpreted as the foundation of 'modernization' in this context.

Following independence from Britain the Kenyan government implemented a policy of group ranches for pastoralists to live on. Group ranches were established in 1968 under the Kenya Livestock Development Program (KLDP), and all men over the age of 18 received a part ownership in the communal lands. The group ranches "were created from previously communally managed Trust Lands with far-reaching implications for the control and distribution of benefits from use of that land" by an elite population who controlled these resources (Thompson and Homewood, 2002, p. 115). The Kenyan government's purpose for the group ranches was to:

reduce the stocking rates and therefore, land degradation in the pastoral areas; commercialize livestock production in the pastoral areas which was mainly subsistence, thus improving the earning capacity of pastoralists; increase the Maasai's contribution to the national economy; and guard against landlessness among pastoralists, as a result of haphazard allocation of grazing land to some people, and the risk of the majority receiving individual ranches too small to be viable. (Kimani and Pickard, 1998, p. 204).

The prevalent thought during the period after independence for many African countries was to encourage people and communities to generate an income in the market economy

⁶ The legality of these treaties is still in question as many Maasai have fought to have them reversed. They were signed by leaders who did not have the authority to give up the communal lands, and therefore, the Maasai are presently fighting for the return of their lands (Phombeah, 2004).

to promote national economic growth. The Maasai community did not integrate themselves into the national economy as had been planned by the Kenyan government since they were able to organize their lands in a communal way that did not result in overgrazing. In this way they adapted their situation to meet the external pressures (Kimani and Pickard, 1998).

Beginning in the 1970s, however, many younger Maasai began to demand the sub-division of group ranches as they wanted to have the security of ownership entitling them access to loans, and ensuring that their children would have land on which to live (Kimani and Pickard, 1998, p. 205). This desire for private property rights to secure loans and a livelihood for their children can be interpreted as a step towards modernization and the continuous cultural transformation of the Maasai. Despite government opposition to sub-division, it was granted in 1983, and fragmentation of the land began.

The history of the Maasai is overwhelmingly about the loss of land and its effects on social collectivity, which has forced them to utilize more marginal environments leading to land degradation in order to maintain group collectivity. This history of land loss and enforced cultural change can be interpreted as the building block for the Maasai to move towards formal education and modernization as it is showing their adaptability to outside influences.

III. Culture, Lifestyle and the Political System

The culture of the Maasai has as much to do with the daily life and lifestyle of the individual as it does with socio-cultural practices of the entire community. The Maasai are a pastoralist community who occupy lands that range from savannah to semi-arid to arid lands. Pastoralists, like the Maasai, utilize these lands to their highest potential moving from one area to the next, allowing their herds to graze from the land, but not to

the extent that the land is damaged by it. This lifestyle demands access to a large area of land in order to allow for an adequate diet of both grass and water for their livestock (See figure 1). This is achieved by having access to dry- and wet-season lands that permit the best access to water and grass for that season. Fundamental for a traditional Maasai community, this way of life can be seen in the many ceremonies and other aspects of life that symbolize the centrality of living on the land and mobility (Galaty, 1983).



Figure 1: Cows being herded.

Maasailand “is divided into sixteen clearly bounded and largely autonomous tribal sections, and each of these in turn comprises several *manyata* [villages] territories for purposes of defence” (Spencer, 2003, p. 45). The Maasai is a community that geographically is formed by “the household (the basic unit), the *boma* (a number of

households in the same compounds), the neighbourhood (a cluster of *bomas*), and the section (a group of neighbourhoods in the same area).” Lands for pasture are traditionally controlled at the section level, which shows an egalitarian society as many lives depend on this communal living (Kimani and Pickard, 1998, p. 204). Seno and Shaw reiterate the communal nature of the Maasai and add that “access to pastures and water is regulated under traditional land laws and enforced through a council of senior elders” (2002, p 79).

The organization of Maasai homes is representative of their culture and style of living. The homes are made from a structure based on sticks wrapped together and then plastered with mud and cow dung to create water-proof walls and a ceiling (See figure 2). The importance of the home is present in what was previously referred to as the *boma*. *Boma* is the Kiswahili word for village, whereas the Maasai use the word *manyatta*, which will be used hereafter. “The Maasai traditional settlement [or *manyatta*] reflected their social life with kinship, mythology and social ties playing important roles” (Rukwaro and Mukono, 2001, p. 85). The organization of the *manyatta* highlights the importance of cattle, the polygamous lifestyle of the Maasai, and since it is comprised of several families, the importance of community. The household is made up of a husband and his wife or wives and their children.

The homestead [household] of each stock-owner [husband, and therefore elder] has its own gateway, and each wife has her own hut. In polygamous families, these huts are located on alternate sides of the gateway in order of seniority. A married son often lives in the same village as his father, but with a separate homestead (and hence gateway) (Spencer, 2003, p. 44).

The first and third wives build their huts on the right side of the gate, while the second wife and those who marry in even positions, build their huts on the left side. The cattle



Figure 2: This is a home in the process of being built. The sticks are the support and then leaves are put in for insulation. On the inside of the house, one can already see the mixture of mud and cow dung on the walls that will then be put on the outside, ceilings, and roof, once they are put into place.

kraal, (See figure 3) which is home to the livestock at night, is built in the centre of the *manyatta* and is guarded by the sons during the night. “The central location of the kraal expressed architecturally the importance both physical and symbolic of cattle in their life. Cattle were the quintessential expression of a man’s wealth” (Rukwaro and Mukono, 2001, p. 86).

The political structure of the Maasai community is egalitarian for all men. The community lacks chiefs and kings and instead is formed politically by age-sets. An age-set is a group of men all of whom are about the same age who go through a series of

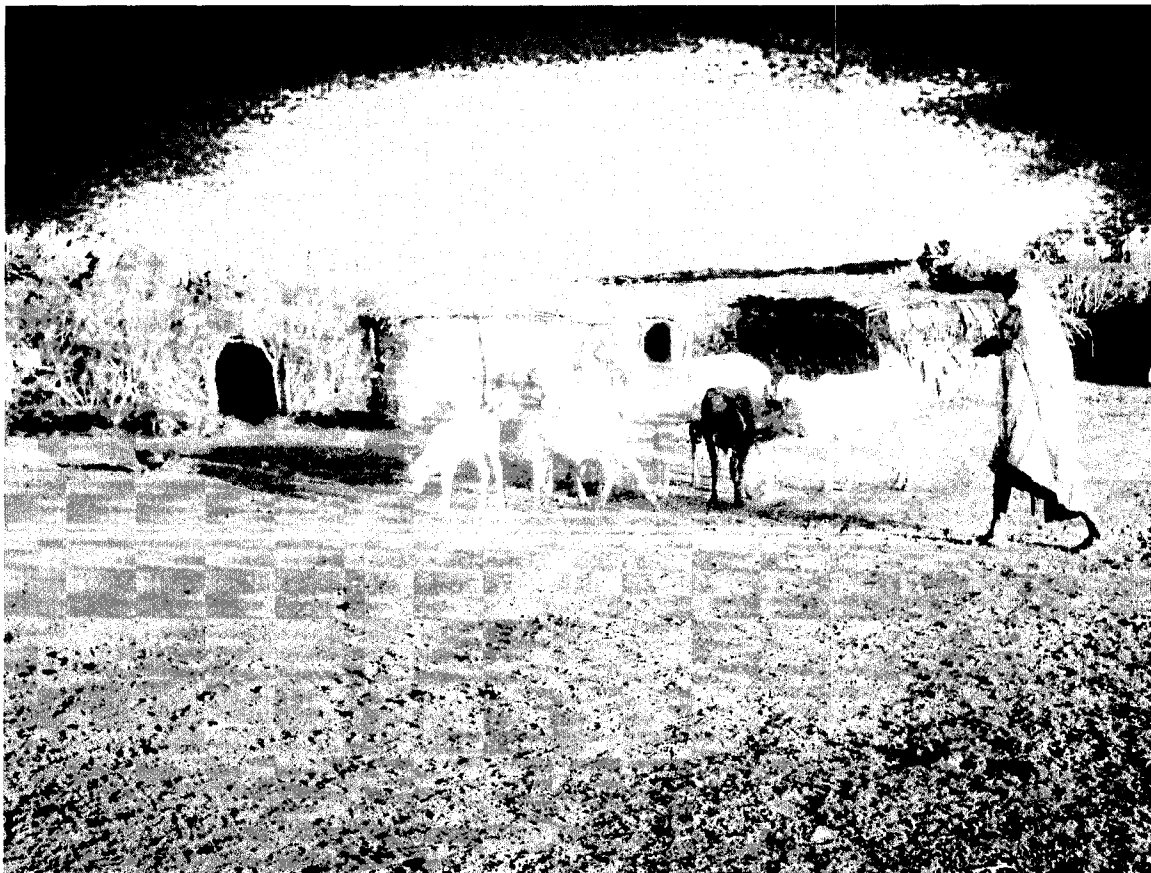


Figure 3: This is the cattle kraal, with calves entering the village for the night. Notice how it is in the centre of the *manyatta* and the stick wall and huts that surround the area. To the left of the hut is the gate, which allows people to enter into the kraal and helps the community protect its livestock.

events together until they reach retired elder status. The first politically meaningful stage is the *moran* (warriors) into which the young men are initiated through a circumcision ceremony which occurs traditionally between the ages of 15 to 20. Currently this ceremony is occurring at a younger age.

All those young men circumcised during the same open period, lasting about five years, constitute a single moran group of which there are two for each age-set. The first to be circumcized are known as the right-hand group. They establish themselves in special warrior villages, or *manyattas*, and serve as junior warriors until after about ten years they graduate in to senior warrior status at a special milk-drinking ceremony, called E-Unoto, at which time they break up their *manyattas* and begin to marry and settle down (Tignor, 1972, p. 277).

The *morans* are expected to comply with various restrictions but are given privileges:

They are, as a collectivity, the sexual mates of uninitiated girls, and enjoy the favour and attention of society. At the same time, they are submitted to a strict social, sexual and dietary discipline which enhances their prestige. Morans theoretically cannot have sexual relations with initiated women [women who have been circumcised], and thus technically cannot marry; these restrictions are mirrored in the domain of food consumption, for they cannot eat meat which has been seen by initiated women, and can only drink milk or water in the company of age peers. While the negative stricture excludes them from full participation in ordinary domestic life, the positive sanction requires age-set solidarity, reinforced by the institution of the age-set village (Galaty, 1983, pp. 368-369).

The two main purposes of *moranhood* are to rid adolescent Maasai men of their rebellious nature and to allow them to learn the culture and skills of governance through democratic means. Present *morans* will in turn govern the community as elders. Other purposes of *moranhood* include; protecting the villages from attack and increasing individual wealth for the *morans* by cattle raiding. Cattle raids may include playful raids of their own villages as well as dangerous excursions into Tanzania to steal cattle and bring them back over the border. *Moranhood* is designed also as a means to create unity, diplomacy and respect between the warriors in the age-set (Tignor, 1972, p. 277).

Morans graduate to become junior warriors through a ceremony called *E-unoto*. This ceremony is pivotal in a man's life because it represents a movement away from a rebellious stage to a more settled lifestyle. The junior elder becomes concerned with familial affairs and mastering the intricate responsibilities of their community and consequently is given more respect than he previously had as a *moran*. Once the next age-set graduates from *moranhood*, the junior elders are promoted to senior elders, displacing the senior elders who become retired elders. As senior elders, the group governs the community and is given tremendous respect. Retired elders no longer govern; however, they are sought out for their wisdom on many different issues (Tignor, 1972, pp.276-278 and Spencer, 2003).

The political structure of the Maasai has lasted for hundreds of years and allows adolescents to go out on their own and live their lives. *Morans* bond with their age-group by growing up from rebellious young men to become responsible elders who are capable of rational and wise governing strategies. The political structure allows this to happen by creating a democratic environment among senior elders including punishment that can be laid upon an elder by his entire age-group. These punishments are strong enough to keep most men in line and have stronger repercussions the older one gets. Junior elders learn their responsibilities by engaging with senior elders, and when it is their turn to govern they should be capable as they have learned the skills of democracy from *moranhood* through to elderhood. The system serves as a social apprenticeship to maintain cohesion, control and security within the community.

It has been argued by many that the role of women in the Maasai community is to be pawns as well as custodians of tradition. Girls are subordinate to their fathers, wives are subordinate to their husbands, and when her husband dies, a mother becomes subordinate to her sons. Fathers arrange their daughter's marriage and she will not be given the right to question his decision because the father is an elder; she must respect and trust that he knows best (Spencer, 2003, p. 33). However, Spencer demonstrates that through social networks that are created as a result of their nomadic lifestyle, women are able to punish elders who have stepped across the line in abusing a wife or daughter. Spencer explains that in certain situations a mob will rally itself through these social networks and the wives of elders will visit the abusive elder to kill his finest ox. In such instances his age-mates do not come to his rescue, as they might in other cases, so as not to garnish the wrath of the women. The threat of the female mobs keeps many elders in line thereby allowing women to gain some control over their lives (Spencer, 2003, p. 36).

The lives of women revolve around the household. Mothers and daughters collect firewood and water, build the houses, take care of the sick, and raise the small livestock. Traditionally, women held the surplus milk supply and were able to earn some money or trade through selling the surplus. At present, women create beaded jewellery and other tourist souvenirs which they sell at different markets (Bruner and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 1994, p. 444).

The journey from girlhood to womanhood is not as complicated a journey as it is for men. Cheryl Bentsen, a journalist who lived in Kenya for several years documented her time with the Maasai. She illustrates the life of women growing up in the Maasai community.

From what I saw, the women's lives held few pleasures. Maasai men are often twice the age of their wives; marriages are family arrangements involving transactions in cattle, blankets and honey beer. Joseph said that some girls were 'booked' for marriage when they were infants. The young girls were allowed to stay in moran camps called manyattas, and most began 'playing sex,' as Mary called it, when they were ten or eleven. For a brief period, a year or two, they enjoyed carefree lives of flirtation, singing and dancing, and making beaded bracelets for the moran. But at the first signs of puberty, girls left the manyattas to be circumcised and married (Bentsen, 1989, p. 40).

Bentsen goes further to say that becoming pregnant before circumcision was taboo. The reason for circumcision is not entirely clear, except that it allows the distinction from being a child to an adult for both girls and boys (Ibid, 204). "The practice of clitoridectomy – the cutting away of the clitoris and outer lips of the vagina – is a requirement for marriage, a brutal surgery done with a razor and no anaesthesia" and is performed by older women from the community" (Ibid, p. 40). This practice is changing slowly as global influences are demanding its elimination. The government declared female circumcision illegal in 2001 and continues to denounce it by labelling it 'female genital mutilation'. This practice, however, is persisting, especially within the Maasai

community, as internal communal pressures demand it. Women who are uncircumcised tend to be shunned and often have difficulty marrying within their community forcing many to change their minds after being isolated (Opiyo, 2007).

The culture of the Maasai is changing quite dramatically as an outcome of interacting with a number of different external forces. These include religion, land privatization, tourism, and job opportunities. This study will show that cultural change must now take into account access to the formal education system in Kenya, as Maasai children are learning to become ‘good western citizens’ through participating in the westernized-style of formal education that they are receiving.

IV. Environmental Concerns and Land Privatization

As the previous section illustrated the Maasai are a mobile community that traditionally understands the importance of not overgrazing. The Maasai live harmoniously⁷ with the wildlife that surrounds them; they raise their livestock, and live in low-density villages so there is little disruption to the natural environment. The livestock live like wild herbivores and come under attack by predators such as lions and leopards. Occasionally, the predators are in conflict with the Maasai and will be killed if they try to attack the livestock. This is traditional life for the Maasai, moving between wet and dry-pastures with their livestock. This lifestyle persisted for hundreds of years, punctuated by brief conflicts with their neighbours, until the arrival of the British in 1885 when land was ceded to the colonial government.

Once group ranches were established, the global philosophy for environmental management turned to what Garret Hardin has termed *The Tragedy of the Commons*

⁷ This is not to say that the Maasai do not experience conflict with the wildlife that surrounds them; however, their lifestyle is one that seldom disrupts the natural environment and thus, the community as a whole rarely disturbs the wildlife.

(1968). This philosophy stated that lands held commonly were bound to become degraded much faster than lands that were privatized. Land owners would take care of their property as it belonged to them, while those living on group ranches would let it become degraded as there would be a race to obtain all viable resources from the land before the next person could utilize them. This theory however, proved false in the case of the Maasai communities. With access to large amounts of land, the Maasai are able to move from one location to another with their livestock, thereby allowing a rejuvenation process to take place in the previous area. In the Maasai community everyone takes care of the communal land as everyone needs the land to survive. Through this process the land is kept in good condition because normally no area is overgrazed or over-utilized in any one season (Fratkin, 2001; Kimani and Pickard, 1998).

From 1983 group ranches began to be abolished and a period of land privatization began, which continues to this day in areas such as the Narok District. Many Maasai, especially those located closer to Nairobi began to sell their land to non-Maasai. This has caused problems as the land sold to non-Maasai is used primarily for cultivation. Cultivators erect fences around their land in order to prevent both wild animals and livestock from destroying their crops. Fencing restricts the mobility of the Maasai who are no longer able to wander freely throughout the area. As well, many Maasai are beginning to rely on cultivated crops as part of their daily diet and as a result they are fencing their own property, thus cutting off more area and reducing the mobility of others (Lamprey and Reid, 2004, p. 999). This is becoming a real problem as large areas are sectioned off from use by surrounding pastoralists. The result is that grazing areas are becoming progressively smaller and more damaged as they do not have sufficient time to regenerate. This is a significant shift from traditional times. It is causing non-cultivating

Maasai to migrate to more marginalized land, which is putting stress on these secondary environments (Kimani and Pickard, 1998, p.209).

The Maasai's use of land before and during the establishment of group ranches was more harmonious with their surrounding environment than since privatization. Under the new regime land has become fragmented and the Maasai are losing the area that they need for grazing. This is causing environmental degradation in many regions and is contributing to the changing lifestyle of the Maasai as they are forced to diversify economically (Lamprey and Reid, 2004, p1025).

V. Economic Overview

Traditionally the Maasai did not participate in the monetary economy of Kenya. They traded for food stuffs that they did not have but needed and lived predominantly off their livestock. Presently, however, the Maasai are being forced to participate in the cash economy as they need money to pay taxes, school fees and trips to health clinics for themselves, their families and their animals. This means that many Maasai are diversifying their income through participating in personal and commercial cultivation. This type of agricultural practice is not presently harmful to the surrounding wildlife, as it is on such a small scale that it does not disrupt the movement of animals throughout the area. However, there are some other industries, including mechanized large scale agriculture, that are increasing in size in this region which are much more disruptive to the ecosystem, and are occurring because of land privatization. Farming Associations, which were created during the group ranch system and have persisted since then, are amalgamated lands set aside by a group of Maasai who pool both resources and money. After subdivision of the group ranches, this practice has been further developed where privately held land is amalgamated and fenced and crops harvested for regional and

national sales. This type of employment is changing the structure and culture of the area (Thompson and Homewood, 2002, p. 121). As land fragmentation continues there is less room for communal living and a nomadic lifestyle. This will force many more Maasai to diversify, as they are no longer able to live a nomadic lifestyle.

Many Maasai have begun to sell or lease their lands to large-scale commercial cereal farmers. These commercial farmers, unlike the Maasai, have the resources to purchase mechanized equipment that helps produce higher yields. This type of farming utilizes large tracts of land and is creating even greater rates of land fragmentation in the area (Thompson and Homewood, 2002, p. 122).

VI. Education in Kenya

During the colonial era, the colonial government was not concerned with investing in the Kenyan people and instead left educational development to missionaries. Despite the good intentions of missionaries they assisted the colonial government by providing a system of access and control over the indigenous population. This was done by breaking down traditional education and, through time, creating a belief among Kenyans that their traditional culture was backward and uncivilized and that they should aspire to be like the 'civilized' British. The successful infiltration by the missionaries allowed the colonial government to penetrate the entire society as members of indigenous communities converted to Christianity, and became translators and other low level civil servants (Sheffield, 1973, p. 3). The colonial government created a racially segregated school system, devoting most financial resources to improving the education of white settlers, while only marginally developing African education (Ominde Report, 1964, p. 21).

With independence in 1963, Kenya sought to transform its racially segregated education system in order to fulfill the needs of a newly independent country. The

colonial government had left a strong legacy but the paradox of living between two worlds, the traditional and the modern, persisted. Kenyans craved a western-style of education and knowledge, as they believed that this would promote economic development and the acquirement of riches that the British and white settlers were accustomed to. These aspects of modernization were embraced as many detested the old traditional learning systems, and longed for modernity, which they believed indicated power and strength. However, there were others who resisted these new and modern conveniences. They enjoyed their traditional way of life and wanted to continue with their own methods of living. This struggle is still evident throughout many parts of Kenya, with some indigenous people striving to achieve modernity, while others are rejecting it, wanting to maintain their traditional lifestyle.

The previous discussion sets the stage for the issues found in Kenya's educational system. A colonial past infiltrated every aspect of Kenyan society through the transplantation of British institutions and morals that were developed over many years in a continent entirely different from the one to which it was transported, and a cultural heritage that is strong, but being weakened by the western hegemony adopted by many Kenyans. Educators responsible for the evolution of the education system in Kenya are trying to maintain a balance between engaging with modernity and preserving the cultural heritage that is unique to Kenyan society. This is a difficult task, as global organizations are influencing many aspects of Kenyan life including the education system.

The 1960s and 1970s were a very exciting time for academics in the area of Kenyan education. There were many prominent issues being discussed and people in the academic and policy world were optimistic regarding education policy throughout Africa, and more specifically, Kenya. During this period people believed that independence

provided a chance to change the colonial legacy that had been established throughout Kenya. Authors like Sheffield (1973), discussed the role of the independent Kenyan government; as one directed towards the expansion of the education system. This would enable Africans to fill the vacancies in the civil service, as well as creating national unity throughout the country (Sheffield 1973). This statement was reiterated by Court and Ghai, who also incorporated outside issues that influenced the progress of education throughout Kenya.

Implicit in most of these works is a concept of development which approximates the institutional forms and underpinning values of western industrial nations and belief that the movement towards this desirable condition can be accelerated by using schools to develop the types of knowledge and skills which have proved useful in those nations (Court and Ghai, 1974, p. 4).

Ghai (1974) notes that how in the years following independence in Kenya, progress in the Africanization of Kenyan schools was achieved through the replacement of expatriate teachers with locally trained Kenyans (1974, p. 330).

After Independence, the Kenyan government organized committees to guide the restructuring of their educational system. These committees produced various reports including the Ominde Report (1964), the Gachathi Report (1976), the Mackay Report (1981), the Kamunge Report (1988), the Koech Report (1999), and the report on “Policy Framework for Education, Training and Research” (2004). Through their analysis, it can be seen that the authors of the government reports were trying to maintain a balance between modernity and preserving Kenya’s cultural heritage. Themes discussed include issues with cultural breakdown through westernized education and media outlets, causing the Committees to recommend social ethics classes (Kamunge, 1988, p. 14; Koech, 1999, p. 31); the desire for white collar jobs, created through the colonial legacy of occupational

racial segregation (Gachathi 1976, pp. 19-20; Koech, 1999, p. 3); issues with rural-urban migration, again created by the colonial legacy of power residing in urban centres (Gachathi, 1976, p. 63); and ideas of creating national unity through implementing human rights of equality (Ominde, 1964, p. 22; Gachathi, 1976, p. 4; Koech, 1999, p. 4; Kamunge, 1988, p. 56). More specifically, these documents address the purpose of Kenyan education. These documents illustrate that the Kenyan government's aspiration for the development of its citizenry is to create national unity, an economically productive workforce and 'good western citizens'.

Despite being written by professionals the recommendations in the reports were not always followed by the government when initiating policy. In fact the government tended to pick and choose which ideas that it would follow as the Committees did not always recommend policy that would benefit the urban or modern economy, but instead chose to include rural and 'traditional' economic development. Often cited in the Committee's reports are the issues of cultural and social breakdown of Kenyan society.

The Koech Report states;

there are social groups such as clans, age mates and elders through which the youth acquire social education and ethics. Strong extended family systems also reinforce whatever is taught by these social groups. However, these traditional systems of cultural transmission have either weakened or broken down with the adoption of the formal education system and foreign religions and cultures. This process is being undermined further by the onslaught of Western culture and social practices, principally through the media (Koech Report, 1999, p. 25).

Similar accounts of cultural breakdown are noted throughout all of the reports, with examples that show the impact of western influences and an increasingly integrated global economy. In every case, the Committees believe that it is globalization that is

causing problems within their country and, consequently, they try to influence the Kenyan government to combine western influences with Kenyan heritage.

The Committees identify the desire for white-collar jobs as problematic since it is combined with a hatred for working in agriculture, manual labour and vocational jobs. This mentality stems from colonial times as the British restricted education for Africans to the realm of manual labour, vocational training, and agriculture. Kenyans still believe that working in these areas is inferior and less prestigious than working in the modern sector. This belief is reinforced by western influences, such as media, that portray these industries as suitable for the dull and incompetent person (Koech, 1999, p. 3). Kenyans and their government are responding to the legacy of colonialism reinforced through western hegemonic representations of success. They see power and strength in the modern market in jobs such as civil servants, banking and other business endeavours. The belief in the extreme power of the western economy, which is thought to consist of only white collar opportunities, has helped facilitate this mentality.

This trend is already evident in the formal education system in Kenya which is looked upon by the public purely as a means of entry into the modern sector of the economy. It is associated with breeding white-collar job attitudes. There is very little or no exposure within the education system to the realities of work even in terms of such essential requirements of organizational abilities and skills that are necessary even in modern sector jobs (Gachathi, 1976, p. 19-20).

However, the Committee notes that only one out of ten people who graduate from secondary school actually find jobs in the modern economy (Gachathi, 1976, p. 63). This is reinforced by Buchmann who states that

[t]he extreme competition for places in secondary and higher education is rivaled only by the competition for wage sector employment... Kenya's total labor force of approximately 9.91 million people in 1990, nearly 1.4 million (about 14 percent) are employed in the formal wage sector. An additional 500,000 work in the informal sector or are self-employed. The remaining 85

percent of the labor force is engaged in agriculture and pastoralism (Republic of Kenya 1991b). With the labor force growing at a rate of 3.6 percent annually to an estimated total of 14 million by the year 2000, there is intense competition in the wage labor sector (Republic of Kenya 1991d). (Buchmann, 1999, pp. 109-110).

These statistics have persuaded the Committees to include among its goals the need to reduce the influence of the global community on both the government and citizens of Kenya, and to train more workers for agriculture and vocational jobs, such as woodworking, masonry, bricklaying, typing and book keeping (Gachathi, 1976, p. 56), where there is room for growth. It appears that the Gachathi Committee is attempting to limit the flow of people migrating to urban centres and to reverse the country's beliefs that powerful people live and work in the city in the modern economy. Their recommendation is to "make the education system seek to alter attitudes towards careers in agriculture and to reinforce changes in aspirations by income redistribution which encourages self-reliance, creativity, use of local resources, initiative and appropriate technology" (Gachathi, 1976, p. 12). It is their belief that by making agriculture, vocational training, and manual labour seem more appealing that more people will participate in these sectors, which will effectively reduce the sphere of influence that the global community has over the citizens of Kenya.

One instance of Committee recommendations taking shape is the structural change in the formal education system. In 1986 the Mackay Report's (1981) suggestion to streamline the educational system was put into effect by replacing the out dated 7-4-2-3 system with the 8-4-4 system (Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, 2004, p. 2).

The objective of the new educational system is to orient education toward creating a balance between skills and academic knowledge and to create a reservoir of skilled and semi-skilled manpower in the country. It is stressed

that the emphasis in the new system will be toward technical and vocational education. It is pointed out that ‘the 8-4-4 system, with its emphasis on technical and vocational education, will ensure that the students graduating at every level have some scientific and practical knowledge that can be utilized either for self-employment, salaried employment, or for further training’ (Godia, 1987, p. 362).

Global institutions like the United Nations influence educational policy in Kenya. Kenya joined the United Nations in 1963 and the first Committee, which wrote the Ominde Report, was organized in 1964. The purpose of the United Nations is to create peace and equality among and between nations. Failure to comply with these ideals carries consequences including expulsion (www.un.org) thereby influencing Kenya to maintain the human rights protocol laid out by the UN in their school system. The Ominde Report’s first decision was to eliminate racial segregation in the educational system, a legacy of colonial times, and to promote equality. Their goal was to have people “think of education as a function of the Kenya nation” (Ominde, 1964, p. 22) and not as several nations living side by side, as it had been in colonial times.

The notion of equality for all was declared in the 1948 General Assembly of the United Nations. This has influenced the formal education system in Kenya, as can be seen with various quotations throughout the reports: “Now, however, equal rights of all citizens, unhindered by considerations of race, tribe or religion, are not only openly acknowledged, but are also enshrined in the basic law of Kenya” (Ominde, 1964, p. 22). The Ominde Report states that people have the right to freedoms, which cannot be hindered. It also states that people must be respected in education. In terms of creating national unity, the Gachathi Report states that “[t]hey must be able to remove social and regional inequalities in order to facilitate everybody’s contribution towards national unity” (Gachathi, 1976, p. 4). Social inequalities tend to be self-explanatory; however,

regional inequalities deal not only with issues of urban versus rural, but also with tribal equality. The first two presidents of Kenya tended to invest most in areas where their ethnic group was based thus causing high levels of inequality throughout Kenya (Amutabi, 2003, p. 135). The Gachathi Committee tried to establish regional equality in order to expand equal access to different educational institutions, social services and job opportunities. This also offers interesting geographical overlays as there are issues of ethnic power, hierarchy and socio-spatiality versus the modern ethos of equality regardless of region and identity. The Koech Report acknowledges a range of human rights issues, especially those pertaining to women and girls' education.

With regard to girls' access to education, gender equity remains one of the major challenges of Kenya's education system, especially at the secondary and tertiary levels. Half of Kenya's population is composed of women who have to be just as skilled and as informed as men so that they can play an equal role in the development of Kenya in the 21st century (Koech, 1999, p. 4).

Although the last report (2004) was not the first report to mention Universal Primary Education and Education For All, it incorporates a plan to enable this to happen. Primary education for everyone is a human right that has not been implemented by countries in the developing world because of the high costs for the government involved and the intervention of the World Bank and IMF (Akala, 2002). The goal of the Committee is to achieve Education for All by 2015 and Universal Primary Education by 2005 (Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, 2004, p. 23). Kenya has achieved its goal of Universal Primary Education or Free Primary Education (FPE), however, with this accomplishment comes unexpected financial problems. The statements included in the various reports demonstrate Kenya's dedication to human rights for all. The establishment of these goals are influenced by international organizations such as the United Nations,

which is trying to create a world that is free from oppression, free from fear

(<http://www.un.org/Overview/rights.html>).

There are alternatives to formal education laid out in the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology's plan that include non-formal education (NFE)⁸. NFE, as defined by the Kenyan government, is "any organized, systematic and quality education and training programs, outside the formal school system, that are consciously aimed at meeting specific learning needs of children, youth and adults" (Ministry of Education, 2005, p.1). The government has indicated it will support NFE "to deliver quality education for those children who for one reason or another do not fit in the formal system... The objective of the reforms is to improve access, equity, quality and relevance of education and training at all levels" (Ministry of education, 2004, pp. 3-4). The government recognizes its responsibility to provide education for all children because as it notes despite implementing FPE "an estimated 1.5 million children still remain out of the formal school system" (Ministry of Education, 2004, p. 10) and that in rural areas such as where the Maasai live, enrolment rates are the lowest (Ministry of Education, 2004, p. 17). NFE schools tend to be run by NGOs and private companies as the government is focusing its attention on the formal education system. Admittedly there are problems for children and youth who graduate from NFE schools as many higher educational institutions and companies do not yet recognize the qualifications of these graduates. The Kenyan government recognizes that this needs to be rectified and that the:

main challenges [for NFE] relate to the low quality of education provided and the lack of linkages with the formal education system. The sub-sector also suffers from the lack of adequate teaching and learning resources, poor

⁸ Non-formal education is different from traditional education that many communities provide for their own youth.

physical facilities and low prioritization by Government in terms of budgetary allocations (Ministry of Education, 2004, p. 10).

Other agencies that presently are affecting the quality of education in Kenya include the World Bank and IMF. In the early 1990s these two organizations succeeded in compelling the government to reduce expenditure on many social services, including education. Their recommendations included decreasing the number and salaries of teachers in order to increase expenditure on facilities and cost-sharing, which means that those who use the resource pay the most for it, resulting in parents paying school fees so that their children can use the system (Akala, 2002, p. 4). The recommendations have caused understaffing in the school systems and have led to the degradation of the system.

The current situation in the formal education system in Kenya is as follows: The present government, during its first term, was elected on the promise of eliminating school fees for primary school children in accordance with the international proclamations that deem education a human right. These include the UN 1948 declaration, the 1990 UNESCO conference on Education for All and the Dakar 2000 conference. Following the elimination of fees in 2003, the number of registered students increased from 5.9 million in 2002 to approximately 7.2 million in 2003 (Mwiria, 2005, p.2). However, as Mukudi states, Free Primary Education (FPE) has had serious consequences as the country does not generate enough money to support the system without removing its support from post-primary education programs. To sustain present levels of education for the additional students who enrolled, Mukudi states that the government would need to raise an additional US \$ 94.6 million to fund universal access to current quality level. (Mukudi, 2004, p. 236). This, of course, is difficult to achieve and has meant the quality of education has declined for most students as the infrastructure,

especially in rural areas, has not been improved. The number of schools has not increased to match the number of students, text books are lacking, and the number of teachers needed cannot be hired because of the structural adjustment programs implemented by the World Bank and IMF (Mukudi, 2004, p. 239). The contradictions of development that are recommended by supranational organizations are incongruous. On the one hand, the IMF and World Bank are insisting that governments reduce spending on social services like education but on the other hand, education is seen as essential to development

Education and the development of a productive workforce are fundamental for any country but the World Bank and IMF impose structural adjustment programs (SAPs) whenever loans or grants are given, in an attempt to ensure the repayment of debt through liberalizing the economy of developing countries. The SAPs are forcing independent governments to limit their spending on social services, including education. Limiting investment in education curtails the state's ability to help produce a productive workforce. Stephen Lewis (2005) demonstrates how the International Financial Institutions (IFIs or supranational organizations) including the World Bank and IMF and other regional development banks, are complicit in effectively crippling African nations and retarding their development.

Where education is concerned, the IFIs [International Financial Institutions] have a debt of their own to pay back to Africa. The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund should foot the bill for free primary education. In other circumstances, it would be called reparations; in present circumstances, it should be called mandatory restitution (Lewis, 2005, p. 106).

Chapter 4: Methodology

I. Introduction

The goal of this chapter is to give transparency to my research, which will allow the reader to understand the researcher, the participants, the methods and choices made throughout the research process. This chapter also gives a detailed account of the study site; giving the reader a better understanding of the environment involved.

II. The Researcher

Some positivists argue that it is important to remove researcher bias from the research process in order to be completely objective. Post-positivist research shares the common view that it is impossible to achieve absolute objectivity in research. This is reiterated by Mishler (1986: 83) “How the interviewer’s role is to be taken into account is of course a difficult problem, but it is not solved by making the researcher invisible and inaudible, by painting him or her out of the picture.” (quoted in Hoggart, Lees and Davies, 2002, p. 223). Instead, most post-positivist research explicitly paints the researcher in.

On that note, I would like to paint myself into my research. I am white, I come from a privileged background and I am attracted to working with groups who lack a voice, politically, economically, and socially, and as I write this, I find it condescending; however, I see this sentiment as guiding my actions. My beliefs about cross-cultural research are reflected in those of Hays, quoted below, in that I want my research to be of some value to those it represents.

Colonial research reflects and reinforces domination and exploitation through the attitudes and differential power embodied in its research relationships with ‘others’, its dismissal of their rights and knowledge, its intrusive and non-participatory methodologies, and often also in its goals and in its use of

research findings. Postcolonial research, to me, is a reaction to and rejection of colonial research and is intended to contribute to 'others' self-determination and welfare through methodologies and the use of research findings that value their rights, knowledge, perspectives, concerns, and desires and are based on open and more egalitarian relationships. Decolonising research goes further still in attempting to use the research process and research findings to break down the cross-cultural discourses, asymmetrical power relationships, representations, and political, economic, and social structures through which colonialism and neo-colonialism are constructed and maintained. I owe the term 'inclusionary research' to your use of it for a particularly revolutionary kind of decolonising research aimed at helping empower subordinated, marginalised, and oppressed others and to provide training and tools they can use to 'over-turn' their world. (Hays, 2005, p. 32).

Now that there is an understanding about who the researcher is and from which philosophy the researcher is coming from, I would like to introduce the reader to the study site.

III. Study Site: Narok District and the area surrounding the Maasai Mara National Reserve

The Maasai occupy large areas of land that are divided politically into 16 territories. For the purpose of this study, *Maasailand* refers to the area that surrounds the Maasai Mara National Reserve (MMNR), which is located in the Narok District of Kenya (figure 4 and 5). The majority of the research took place in the area adjacent to the MMNR (Narok South); however, interviews were also conducted in Nairobi and Narok City (Narok North).

The Maasai Mara National Reserve is part of an ecosystem that extends south into Tanzania from Kenya and is approximately 25 000 km² in area. This ecosystem is home to a large variety of flora and fauna and supports the Maasai community. The Kenyan section of the ecosystem is located in the south-western part of Kenya, in the Rift Valley Province and covers 6000 km² of land, of which 25 % forms the Maasai Mara

National Reserve and the other 75% forms an unprotected area that is inhabited mainly by Maasai communities. However, it is becoming increasingly populated by other agro-pastoral communities as well as lodges and campgrounds for ecotourism (Walpole, Karanja, Sitati, and Leader-Williams, p. ix).

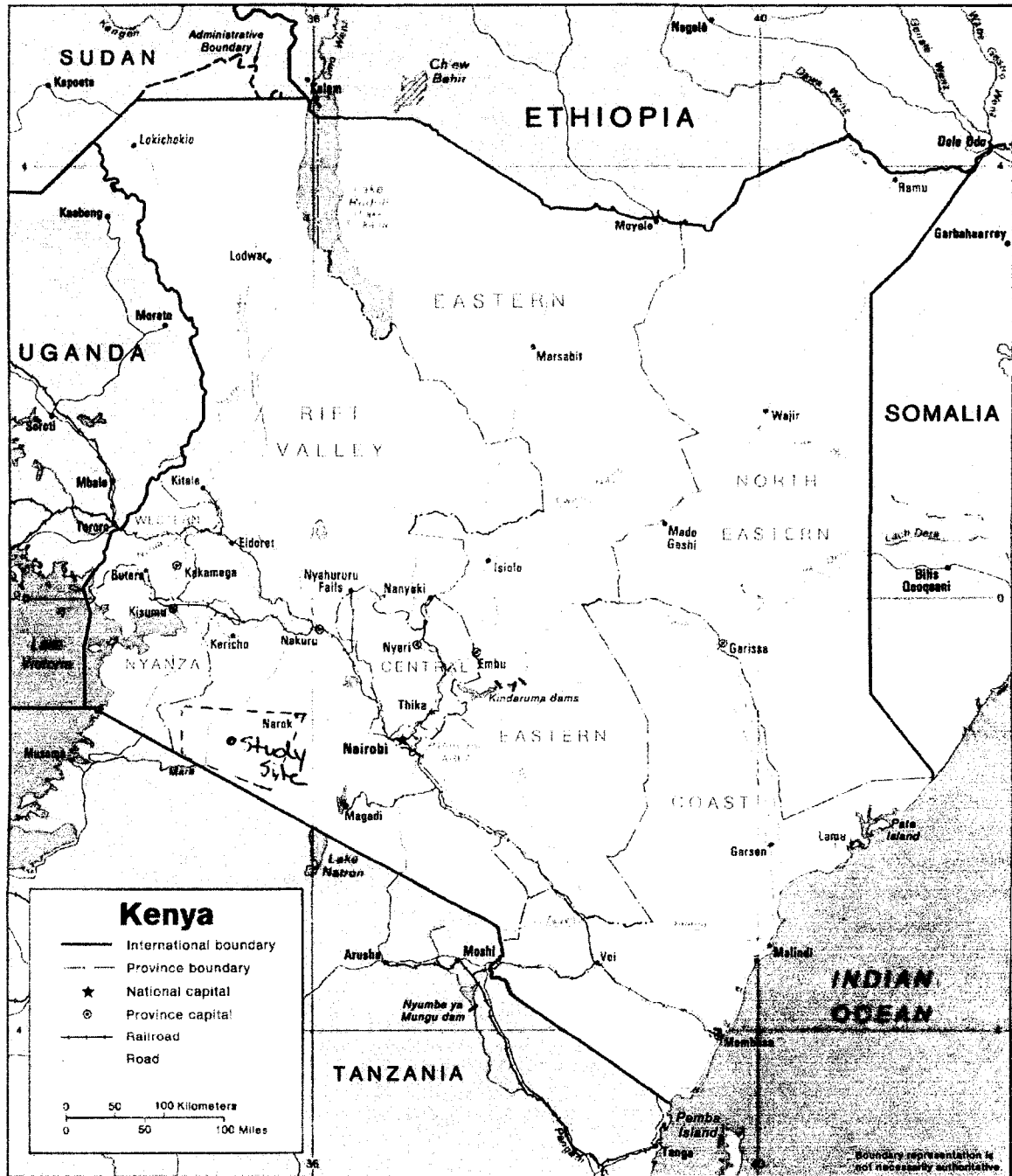


Figure 4: A map of Kenya showing the study site (www.lib.utexas.edu/map/kenya.html).

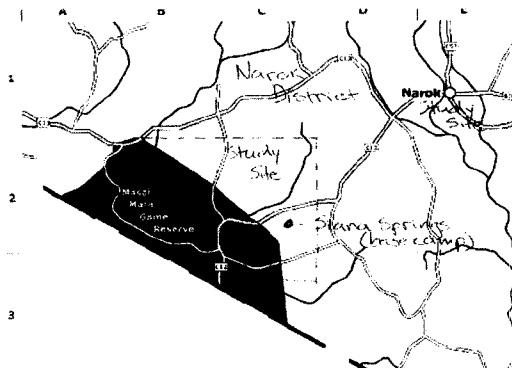


Figure 5: Narok District. Including the Maasai Mara National Reserve, which is highlighted in green. The Study site is marked and includes Narok City. Siana Springs was my base camp and we moved from that location each day (www.go2africa.com/kenya/masai-mara/default.asp?accomm=5#map).

The MMNR and surrounding area receive about 600 – 1000 mm of rainfall per year, with higher amounts falling on the western border of the region, which is heavily influenced by Lake Victoria. As this area is quite close to the equator, the fluctuation in temperature is insignificant and the mean maximum temperature all year round is between 26 and 30 degrees Celsius. Owing to the shift of the inter-tropical convergence zone (ITCZ), there is a seasonal shift in precipitation. The Mara ecosystem experiences a short rainy season from October to November, and a longer rainy season from March to May. July to October is the dry season, which means the area is only able to maintain a growing season from November to June (Lamprey and Reid, p. 1001). However, because of the two permanent rivers that flow through the ecosystem, the Mara and the Talek Rivers, water is available all year round. This is partly why the Northern section of the Mara-Serengeti ecosystem is the dry season reserve for many animals, including the famous wildebeest migration.

The range of vegetation throughout the MMNR and surrounding area ranges from grasslands typical of a savannah, to more densely wooded areas. This diverse environment provides different habitats for species depending on different resources. The

grass of the plains is dominated by *Themeda triandra*, which is typical in African savannahs and grasslands that have an average to high precipitation. The Acacia dominate both the woody and bushland vegetation. Prior to Maasai settlement, these woody areas were extensive throughout the region, causing epidemics of trypanosomiasis (or sleeping sickness) for those who attempted to live there as the bushlands encouraged tsetse-flies. As the Maasai began to expand their settlement into this region in the early to mid-twentieth century, after being pushed out of other lands by the colonial government, they began to burn the wooded areas to avoid tsetse flies, and thus sleeping sickness (Lamprey and Reid, p. 1007). Despite this intense burning of woodlands, the increase in the elephant population in the area created the biggest difference in woodland cover. The elephants crushed and destroyed large areas of wood covered sections, which dramatically decreased the amount of bushland, and thus tsetse flies in the area (Lamprey and Reid, p. 1007). The effects on other wildlife in the area is unknown; however, it can be assumed that many animals that utilize these wooded areas for homes or shade during the hottest times of the afternoon have been affected.

An extensive range of wildlife lives in the MMNR and the surrounding area. The large number of mammals, reptiles and birds, create a complex food web and ecosystem. The ‘big five’—lions, leopards, elephants, rhinos, and wildebeests—are found in these areas, and attract many tourists. In addition, other species including hippos, giraffes, different kinds of antelopes, monkeys, cheetahs, and 480 different species of birds are present.

Ecotourism is the most vibrant industry in the MMNR. Kenya has become famous for its ecotourism and has attracted thousands of visitors from all over the world. Tourism contributes up to 19 percent of Kenya’s GDP (Coast, 2002, p. 96) with 40 percent of

tourists visiting the Maasai Mara National Reserve (Akama, 1999, p. 716). There are many ways in which the Maasai can participate in this industry. First, all Maasai are supposed to receive an equal share of tourist revenue from the entrance gates into the park, and from taxes imposed on tourists visiting the area. These two income sources are supposed to alleviate the cost of conflict between the wildlife and the Maasai throughout the area. For instance, in the past if a lion killed a cow, a group of *morans* would try to find the lion to kill it in order to prevent further livestock kills. However, because tourism has become so important to Kenya, and lions are one of the main attractions, it is now illegal to kill wildlife. As compensation, the Maasai communities surrounding the MMNR are given a portion of the profits to ease the tension between wildlife and their community (Thompson and Homewood, 2002, p. 126). Secondly, many Maasai have created cultural centres or cultural *bomas* that surround the Reserve, in order to perform for and educate the tourists on their culture. Tourists enter the villages and view their stick and mud huts and are shown how to milk cows and string together the sticks to build their homes; and the Maasai are careful to keep all electronic and other modernized material out of sight so as not to disrupt the tourists' 'authentic' Maasai experience (Bruner and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 1994, p. 466). Souvenirs are offered for sale at these cultural centres. Souvenirs include the traditional beaded jewellery that women make and other items such as beaded dog collars for pets, and spears that come apart easily to fit into one's luggage for the trip home. The Maasai have been able to exploit a niche in the tourist industry. Tourists are able and willing to come and view their villages to experience and learn about the traditional Maasai ways. The Maasai are able to earn an income from the tourists through entrance fees into their village and through the sales of souvenirs from their cultural centres (Bruner and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 1994, p.452).

Another way that Maasai have gained from tourism is by forming wildlife associations, similar to farming associations where the land is set aside as a wildlife sanctuary for viewing purposes by tourists. The Maasai charge an entrance fee for viewing the animals and the revenue is split between the association members. This is an effective way to create revenue in the area as it does not disrupt or hinder the movement of wildlife or livestock and land fragmentation is minimal; however, there have been many accusations that the leaders of the wildlife associations are hoarding the revenue for themselves (Thompson and Homewood, 2002, pp. 127-128). The Maasai have adapted to the changes that are occurring in their community. They have adjusted to land treaties and group ranches, and they have adjusted to land privatization and ecotourism. The adjustments are not without costs, however. Through all of these new adjustments, they are becoming more integrated into the globalized world economy. The issue of formal education raises similar challenges of adaptation.

Using one particular area as a study site, instead of focusing on the entirety of *Maasailand*, allowed me to understand specific problems of this one area instead of generalizing among many. Although many of the arguments in this thesis can probably be transposed to other areas of *Maasailand*, the Narok District has a different landscape, economic make-up and, more broadly speaking, less development than other areas of *Maasailand* closer to Nairobi.

IV. Participants

Participants were eligible for this study if they were over the age of 16 and were part of, or working with, the Maasai community in Narok District and in Nairobi. Owing to the size of the area and the distances involved, participation in Narok was limited further to those who were in Narok North (Narok City) and those who were in driving

distance from my camp, Siana Springs. A minimum age of 16 was imposed for this study as it is more complicated to interview children. Maasai children could have brought an interesting aspect to the research but owing to ethical considerations and difficulties with getting parental permission, since schools are far from the villages, they were not included in the study. As well, parents may be illiterate which means that they are unable to sign consent forms for their children and although verbal agreement was used in many cases, parents are less willing to agree to their children being interviewed.

My goal was to interview at least 30 participants who are community members, non-community members, educators, educated and non-educated Maasai participants and key informants who could either be community members or who had worked closely with the community for several years. These groups were divided into three categories (See Table 1 and 2). The main group, Maasai participants, are all community members from

Levels of Education	Non-Educated	Primary School*	Secondary School*	Post-Secondary School*
Male	1	3	5	8
Female	4	2	0	1
Sub Total	5	5	5	9
Grand Total	24 Participants			

* Includes those who have not graduated from that level of education.

Table 1: Number and Gender of Maasai Participants Interviewed.

	Maasai	Non-Maasai
Male	9*	7+
Female	4	0
Sub Total	13	7
Grand Total	20	

* Includes 1 Male who teaches at the Secondary School

+ Includes 2 Males who teach at the Secondary School

Table 2: Number of Educators Interviewed by Gender and Maasai Status.

	Narok County Council	Government Paid Chief	Maasai Elder participating in development for Community
	4	1	1
Grand Total	6		

Table 3: Administrative Positions of Key Informant Participants.

different ages, genders and levels of education. The second group is titled Educators and consists of all people who work in the formal education sector. This group is made up of both Maasai and non-Maasai members and includes a government official from the Teacher's Commission of Kenya and a Maasai professor working at one of the universities in Kenya. The final group, which was also the smallest, was titled Key Informants. Participants in this group consisted of 6 Maasai men working with the community to create development or who held positions of power in the community. Senior elders fall into this category, although unless they held another position of power, they were interviewed as Maasai participants. The most noteworthy of this group was the government paid local chief whose job it is to force school-aged children to attend school.

The goal of 30 participants was surpassed as I was able to interview 50 people through the use of purposeful sampling. Purposeful sampling is a technique used to gather participants who have an interest in the research topic. As Hay (2002) states there are a variety of different techniques used in purposeful sampling. Among these are typical case sampling, in which researchers choose participants who are considered typical, normal or average; opportunistic sampling, where the researcher follows new and sometimes unexpected leads during fieldwork; convenience sampling, which involves selecting participants on the basis of convenience, for instance, those who the researcher has easy access to; and criterion sampling, which involves picking a participant because of a

specific attribute or other criteria (Hay, 2002, p. 72). I used a combination of these techniques to attract participants for my study and this allowed for a wide variety of people to be interviewed.

The original goal of interviewing 30 participants was determined as it seemed a realistic goal for my timeline and is within the limits of qualitative research. As Hay states:

In both qualitative and quantitative research it is usual that only a sub-group of people or phenomena associated with a case is actually studied. The size of this group is more relevant in quantitative research where representativeness is important. In qualitative research, however, the sample is not intended to be representative since the 'emphasis is usually upon an analysis of meanings in specific contexts' (Robinson 1998, p. 409). (Hay, 2002, p. 72).

This author notes that there are no rules for sample size in qualitative research and it normally depends on the researcher's time and budgetary constraints. The purpose of qualitative research is to obtain rich information that will allow the researcher to fully understand the phenomenon (Hay, 2002, p. 72).

During my stay in Kenya from May 21st to June 21st, 2006, I interviewed a total of 50 people. These were comprised of three groups, each of which was asked a slightly different set of questions (See Appendix 1-3 for the entire list of questions). I interviewed a total of 24 Maasai participants, 20 educators from 7 schools and 6 key informants. Eleven of these were female (both Maasai participants and educators) and the remaining 39 were male. Questions posed to the Maasai participants focused on their own perspectives and how these have changed over time. The key informants were asked more general questions about the entire community, and the educators were asked specific and general questions about the education system and how they have seen it change the Maasai community.

V. Interview Sessions and Focus Groups

The original style of data gathering was for individual semi-structured intense interviews, which were designed to obtain useful information from the participants through open ended questions. As Hoggart, Lees and Davies state

[i]n essence intensive interviewing is appropriate when research seeks to unravel complicated relationships or slowly evolving events. This approach is warranted whenever depth is required. Conducted sensitively, intensive interviews can facilitate the explanation of events and experiences in their complexity, including their potential contradictions. This can lead to insight far beyond the initial imagination of the researcher (2002, pp. 205-206).

This technique was appropriate to my study as I was trying to determine the effects that formal education are having on the community of the Maasai, and therefore I needed to find in-depth information about a slowly changing event from the perspective of the Maasai. This technique is appropriate as a ‘stand-alone method’ (Longhurst, 2003, p. 120); however, I also used focus groups, secondary sources and participant observation, to triangulate and understand fully the implications of educational change for the Maasai.

Originally, the study was designed for individual interviews only; however, as the study progressed, I found that in certain cases, it was more convenient for the participants to be interviewed in groups. As many authors point out, the research process must be dynamic and the researcher must allow for changing techniques and rewording questions and other unexpected events (Hay, 2002; Longhurst, 2003; and Hoggart, Lees and Davies). I found the group interviews to be both a positive and a negative experience. Since the questions were not tailored to focus group situations, I found that groups often got off track and some individuals stopped listening to each others’ answers as the focus groups took longer than I had originally intended. This happened because discussions focussed around interesting points allowing for more diverse information to be obtained,

which is one of the positive attributes for focus group settings (Conradson, 2005, p. 131). Although the questions were not tailored to focus groups, I was able to adapt to the situation as I had prepared three different lists of open ended questions, one for Maasai Participants, another for Educators, and the final for Key Informants. This allowed the participants to elaborate on what they felt was important for the researcher to know (Clifford and Valentine, 2003, p. 117).

The interviewees were asked to answer between 8 and 14 questions and some key interviewees were asked 25. Originally, the interviews were designed to take about 45 minutes to an hour but were shortened to about 20 minutes in length once I began the interview process as I realized that I was interrupting the daily lives of the interviewees and they often had work to be accomplished. Some interviews were only partially completed. This was the case for educators as I was interrupting their daily routine and could only interview them during breaks. As a result, I established key questions that were answered by all participants and a rotating cycle of about five questions that were answered only by some.

VI. Procedure

As my research took place in a foreign country, I needed to be in touch with a local person who would be able to aid my research. A Maasai environmental and social organization and more specifically, the founder, president and a Maasai community member, Mike,⁹ acted as my key liaison. This is an organization based in Washington D.C. that has helped the Maasai community with land dispute problems in the past and is presently undertaking research on education in *Maasailand*. My research is intended as a

⁹ All people named in this thesis have been given pseudonyms.

starting point for this organization. Mike suggested that they would be beginning their own research with the community and would use my work as a foundation upon which to expand. Mike and I started exchanging emails and phone calls in March of 2006. Mike arranged for an interpreter who would drive me to interviews and a respected elder who would be my guide. Gabe, the driver and interpreter and Daniel, the guide, participated in the study and were both tremendously helpful throughout. On advice from Mike, Gabe was paid \$US 200 for three weeks of work and Daniel \$US 100 for two weeks. Gabe's meals and lodging were paid for while in the study area but not in Nairobi as he stayed at his home. Daniel stayed at his village, as it was close to the lodge. While out in the field, Daniel was given lunches, which he often took home for his family.

Working in cross-cultural situations, as I was, necessitates knowing several different languages or having a translator. While most authors will state that it is better to learn the language of the community that you are working with, the reality is often that those working in cross-cultural research will need a translator or interpreter (Hay, 2005; Longhurst, 2003; Hoggart, Lees and Davies, 2002). This was the case for me, as I did not know either *Maa* or Kiswahili well enough to communicate effectively with the Maasai community. My translator helped with the language barriers, but he and my guide were also cultural interpreters for me. I explained to both at the beginning of our journey that I did not wish to offend or intrude on anybody while in Kenya and they showed me the proper etiquette, and when I was confused about something that was said or there were conflicting statements, we would try to unravel things together.

While in Nairobi, Mike acted as my translator; however, once in Narok District and in the area surrounding the Maasai Mara National Reserve in *Maasailand*, Gabe,

became my interpreter and he, Daniel and I worked alone (See figure 6). The three of us travelled to different sites each day to interview educators and Maasai participants.



Figure 6: Daniel, Me and Gabe. Gabe has dressed up as a *moran*, notice the spear, headdress and jewellery that he is wearing (he normally wears modern dress). Gabe also has a wig on, traditionally, *morans* have long hair, while elders keep it short like Daniel's. He is more ornamental than Daniel, who is wearing the traditional dress of a Maasai elder.

The first day, Daniel and I established the route. We spoke about the different locations of schools and the surrounding villages and we scheduled one school and its surrounding villages for each day. During weekends, we went to villages that were not surrounded by schools, which allowed us to cover a lot of ground. I was in rural Narok¹⁰ for about two weeks, which allowed us to visit all the schools in the area and a good number of villages.

¹⁰ Narok is where the majority of my research was done. In an effort to keep this thesis fluid, I have removed 'rural' when describing this area. When describing Narok city, I will indicate it.

Daniel, who is a well respected elder in his community, asked permission for us to enter villages and schools. He would explain briefly what the study was about and then we would be granted permission by either the head teacher or community members. I believe that Daniel's presence reassured the interviewees as they recognized him as a trustworthy member of their community. Gabe also gave validity to the process because although he is from a different area, he spoke their language and understood their culture. This allowed people to feel more comfortable and answer the questions more accurately.

Once Daniel had gained access for us to interview people in schools or villages, Gabe and I began to explain my research further. If the participant spoke English, I would speak to them and if there was something that the interviewee did not understand, Gabe would translate it or explain it another way. If the person spoke English, and was literate, they would be given a consent form to read and sign. The form included the options of direct quotations and audio recording. If the person did not speak English or was not literate, Gabe and I would explain the consent form and we would obtain verbal consent. In these instances, we would ask for consent for direct quotations; however, I did not ask for audio recording, as I did not have enough tapes and therefore, wanted to use them during sessions that I could understand the person instead of understanding Gabe's interpretation of the events.

Gabe is a skilled interpreter; however, as many authors point out, this is not the ideal situation as he is considered a gatekeeper. A gatekeeper can take many forms but in this situation it is a person who interprets the information and relays it to another. I in turn then reinterpret his interpretations, which may or may not be correct (Hoggart, Lees, Davies, 2002, p. 212). These limitations are inherent in cross cultural research and may

skew some results, but overall the benefits of having a culturally appropriate interpreter/translator overcome the drawbacks.

VII. Data Analysis

The data were collected through interviews and focus groups by taking notes and if given permission, by tape recording. Every night I would go over the interviews of that day to add any missing notes to ensure that my shorthand would be comprehensible. Once back in Nairobi, I had time in which to begin transcribing and this continued once I was back in Canada. I utilized NVivo 2.0, a qualitative data analysis program, to help organize my data, which is the purpose of coding (Hay, 2005, p. 223). I went through my notes to find themes and collected relevant information into categories. During the process new themes would emerge, and themes would be further reduced, expanded and amalgamated, thus allowing for an ongoing process of revising and redefining the coding process. As this process took place, I found that themes developed and structured the findings of this study.

Chapter 5: Marginalization and School Enrolment for the Maasai Community

I. Introduction

The Maasai community is being marginalized by its government. Some could argue that this has been happening since colonization and others might argue that it is the community's own fault since they did not fully engage with the modernizing economy as it was evolving. This marginalization has created an environment in which it is difficult to learn and prevents students from attending school. A component of this is the lack of financial support that the Kenyan government provides to the formal education system because of a lack of financial resources. This chapter will show that though the Maasai are responsible for some measure of their isolation, their access to resources, inability to communicate and the lack of infrastructure in the community are preventing Maasai students from engaging with the formal education system. This marginalization is also discouraging further education as it denies many willing students and through them, their families, the opportunity of receiving quality education and a chance of participating in the modern economy. These components all interact together and create an environment that is not conducive to learning, thus forcing the community to live in an area that may not be able to provide for their goals of development.

II. Marginalization

i. Monetary Resources

The Narok District is home to the Maasai Mara National Reserve (MMNR) and generates millions of dollars in tourist revenue every year for the country. The tourist industry has become the number one foreign exchange earner surpassing that of agriculture and cash crops (Laurin, 1999, p. 295). Although the exact amount of revenue

earned by the MMNR is unknown, 40 percent of tourists visit the region. In articles written about the tourist industry in Kenya, the authors declare the MMNR as a great community organization because the revenue that is earned through entrance fees and taxing tourist is shared equally between adult men in the community (Thompson and Homewood, 2002, p. 126). However, speaking with Maasai university students, they described a different situation. Sean stated that

we have enough resources like land and animals to develop but the central government collects the fees and then distributes them to the Maasai, who only get a small percentage. The government then spends the remainder of money on other things, which are divided throughout the country. The Maasai don't benefit from the development and employment from the MMNR (May 26 2006).

The Maasai were forced to give up a substantial portion of their land to the colonial government to create the original game park and in later years gave up more land to make it a reserve. They were promised continuously that they would share in the benefits of the reserve. However, they are not receiving the promised money and they are not benefiting fully from its employment opportunities as jobs in this industry tend to require post-secondary education. As Simon, a Maasai elder states, there are hundreds of people employed in the tourist sector in Narok in the hotels and camps that are located there; however, only two percent of all employees are Maasai and typically they are employed in the low-paid positions, such as night watchmen. Simon believes that there is a real need for education in order for the Maasai to gain access to these benefits (June 5 2006). The Maasai need to engage with the neoliberal global economy, in the form of ecotourism, as it has already altered their history and identity. The state and tourist industry in Kenya are benefiting from the economic activity that is taking place on the Maasai's land and selling the image of Maasai identity. The Maasai are not receiving an

equitable share of these profits and are unable therefore to develop their community and overcome the marginalization that they encounter. Earlier voluntary isolation has created an environment where it is extremely difficult to invest in local infrastructure to the benefit of the community. This has led to the marginalization of the Maasai and a flow of income and resources, such as labour, out of their district, instead of into it.

ii. Communication

The ability to communicate connects the entire world and allows for the process of globalization to occur; however, the inability to communicate with communities outside of your own can also keep your community isolated. This isolation is why many people in the Maasai community are changing their attitudes towards education as this system has brought English and Kiswahili to the community in Narok. Those who have not attended school usually know very little if any Kiswahili and even less English. Higher levels of education lead to improvements in the ability to speak both English and Kiswahili thereby replacing the mother tongue, which is *Maa* for this community. A lack of knowledge of English or Kiswahili makes it harder to live and work in Kenya's tourist economy. There are a plethora of languages spoken in Kenya but English and Kiswahili have been chosen as the two national languages. The decision to include English as one of the national languages is an interesting choice. English is part of the colonial legacy. It is part of the political structure that was originally established and has not been abandoned because of neoliberal globalization. English is the language of the global economy and in Kenya's school system it is used for many subjects such as math and science as Kiswahili has yet to be adapted for these uses (Ominde Report, 1964, p. 83). Learning English and Kiswahili increases one's embodied capital and creates stronger social capital. They allow

people to integrate themselves with other communities and the global economy should they choose to do so.

The inability to understand, read and speak the two national languages prohibits many Maasai from participating and engaging with the world that they live in. As Mike noted, “my parents were more vulnerable to exploitation... than I am because they don’t understand and can’t communicate with other groups” (May 28 2006). Ethan, a Maasai educator states that education is necessary as it allows Maasai to communicate with other regions and understand what is happening in the government and country. (June 2 2006). Mitch, a non-Maasai educator, continues this thought; “elections, how do they decide what to do without education. This community needs to have awareness.” (June 9 2006). Natasha illustrates what it is like for her, “when I go to Narok [city], if I was educated, I could find places I want to go by myself. But since I’m not educated, I must be assisted on where to go, because of reading signs. Therefore, I have to ask where places are because I can’t read. I need to rely on others” (June 7 2006). Increasing social capital through learning the national languages of Kiswahili and English, would promote stronger interactions with other communities. This, however, may force a renegotiation of the community’s space, as new activities such as participating in economic activity, travelling to other communities and becoming more involved in national development and unity may ensue. The world would open up; they would be capable of integrating themselves into the diverse communities of Kenya, which may cause many unforeseen positive and/or negative changes in their community.

A lack of communication skills is one factor leading to the isolation of the Maasai and contributes to their continued isolation and marginalization. Some fault can be attributed to the community for their marginalized status. According to a Maasai

professor, there is an elite group of Maasai leaders who do not have an interest in education because there is a “fear that intellectuals will come and challenge [their position in the community]. It is easier to manipulate illiterate people because they can’t think for themselves, they are ignorant, therefore, they just believe what they are told” (May 27 2006). According to the same person there are two levels of control (the reason for keeping the Maasai uneducated). The first is leaders from outside of the community keeping the Maasai illiterate in order to ensure their continued control over their district. This is “effectively locking them out of controlling the future and development of their community” (May 27 2006). The second level of control is for the same reasons but comes from within the community and it is those Maasai in leadership positions that do not want to have their position challenged by up and coming educated Maasai elites (May 27 2006). This could be the reason why it has taken so long for formal education to be encouraged in the Maasai community. Education represents a threat to the ability of an elite population to control an uneducated group, allowing these elites to control major resources in the area such as the Maasai Mara National Reserve.

The lack of formal education and resulting communication deficit in the Maasai community is contributing to the community’s isolation from outside information. Moreover, the Maasai are left vulnerable to manipulation and control by others. However, there are some in the community who recognize the problems associated with a lack of communication skills and are changing their attitudes towards education and engaging with the formal education system. All of those interviewed who had at least secondary education spoke to me directly without the use of my translator, while some of those with only primary education used my translator and others did not. Those who were interviewed who had secondary education or higher, stated that education has helped

them gain perspectives on other communities, as it allows them to interact and communicate with those from different areas of Kenya and the world. Ben, a Maasai professional living in Nairobi illustrates this by saying “knowledge from education, travelling and interactions with other people has allowed me to understand more about people. Education helps with this interaction” (May 26 2006). It also helps Maasai students realize that they are being marginalized by their country. “Education provides opportunities for young Maasai men and women to see how others treat them, therefore, they can see how marginalized they are” (Mike, May 28, 2006). The Maasai community is treated as a backward and primitive group and as more Maasai children become educated, the way that they are treated by other Kenyans will become more evident, which should encourage more Maasai youth to attend school to help defend and develop their community. An example of this is Sean, who is a university student and one of the main traditional leaders in the Maasai community. He speaks *Maa*, Kiswahili and English fluently and is a well-spoken individual. He says that communication is very important to him because it allows him to “explain things to [his] community because he understands how they think” (May 26 2006). This a very positive attribute in a leader, as he is capable of explaining the issues concerning the Maasai to government officials and to relay the government’s response to his community. As more Maasai students engage with the formal education system, there will be more interactions with outside communities.

iii. Physical Infrastructure

Many Maasai still live in a traditional way, in *manyattas*, which may or may not be close to their neighbours. The low density of people makes it virtually impossible for the Kenyan government to afford to supply the area with electricity and clean water. This raises the question: is it better to have forced villagization (*ujamaas*) as in Tanzania

(Kjekshus, 1977), which enables the distribution of resources like running water, electricity, schools and hospitals, or is it better to allow people to live where they want at the price of not receiving these amenities? Would providing modern conveniences in Narok lead to furthering the westernization of the Maasai community? These are questions that cannot be answered by an outsider and need to be left up to the community. That being said, the lack of modern conveniences and the marginalization by their own government is evident. The District is much less developed than Nairobi and other areas of the country, despite its proximity to the Maasai Mara National Reserve, one of the biggest income earners in the country. As an example, the road network is appalling in some places and non-existent in others. The further you go from Nairobi, south into the Narok district, the worse the roads become. They are impassable in some areas, forcing people to drive beside the road on dirt instead of navigating through the potholes. Beyond Narok city there are no roads into rural Narok and drivers are forced to create their own paths. These poor road networks further contribute to isolation as communities do not have access to modern conveniences such as electricity, running water and hospitals.

To demonstrate the marginalized status of the community, especially its inferior infrastructure, Harry, one of the head teachers who were interviewed, stated that he takes approximately 60 students in standards 4 to 8 to visit Nairobi, Lake Nakuru and other communities. The goal of these trips is to “expose students to how others live and in return it exposes others in the community to new things.” This trip gives many of the students the opportunity to leave Narok for the first time and see modern cities and different ways of living (June 8 2006). It allows children to experience modern urban life and presents them with an alternative they can try to achieve through education. But does the rural education system in Narok give the students the opportunity to achieve this goal

of meaningful employment? There are severe problems with facilities, the number and quality of teachers and the lack of social connection for school graduates. These issues will be discussed below as they contribute further to the Maasai's marginalization.

III. Problems with Schools

i. Facilities

Providing students with a meaningful education is almost impossible when there is a lack of facilities that includes school buildings and teaching materials. These issues are a major factor in the poor quality of education offered to children in Narok. Mike explains how Free Primary Education (FPE) has increased the strain that is being put on the limited number of facilities in Narok.

Even though there is FPE, Narok is starting from a disadvantaged position as they never had the physical structures. Now there are so many more children attending school, without an increase in facilities to receive the increased number of children. Narok is struggling because of a lack of facilities and it is getting worse since the establishment of FPE as more children are going to school; however, the infrastructure is the same as before so it is not enough for the increased number of students. For example, there are children sitting on floors and one textbook between 10 students or the school cuts time of classes so half of the students attend in the morning and the other half in the afternoon (May 27, 2006).

Free Primary Education has had a dramatic effect on many aspects of the educational system and has been contributing to problems throughout Narok. Authors such as Akala (2002) have suggested that FPE was a ploy by the Kenyan government to get elected in the last election; however, I also believe that it is a component of neoliberal globalization since education is one of the main apparatus encouraging western ideals. Supranational organizations are promoting the ideal of education for all. In order for a country to develop its labour resources; it must be able to provide a western-style of education to its citizens, which promote western ideals and neoliberal economic principles. From this

perspective, the current Kenyan government implemented FPE earlier than it could be supported realistically in order to win an election and continue to promote western hegemonic ideals (Akala, 2002).

All educators were asked “In your opinion, what are the biggest problems facing the formal education system in Kenya with regards to the Maasai?” Each school representative answered that a lack of facilities and teaching materials were a constant issue when trying to give quality education. A typical answer came from Jason, a non-Maasai educator, who teaches at a boarding school with the best facilities that I saw in Narok. He said that there are “not enough resources such as books. There are not enough to give quality education. There is borrowing and sharing books between students and it is hard to give quality education when there’s not enough resources.” He continued to speak of the physical structures of his boarding school. “We are missing classrooms for a great number of students and we need to expand the dormitories” (June 1 2006).

A Maasai professor from Moi University shared his reasoning why Maasai students are doing so poorly.

A lack of good educational foundation is preventing Maasai from achieving higher levels of education; therefore, they can’t get further in school. Maasai children aren’t going to university because they lack the foundation that they should be receiving in preschool, primary and nursery (May 27 2006).

He is suggesting that Narok needs to first build quality facilities for preschool and primary school so that students are able to receive a quality foundational education, which they can later apply to secondary and post-secondary education.

The poor facilities are creating an environment that is not conducive to learning and preparation for modern life; however, educators and community members are demanding that the resources be updated in order for modernization to occur at this local level. The

poor facilities are the background of my main argument. Modernization is and will continue to occur. This is changing the culture and lifestyle of the Maasai people; however, this raises the issue of whether these changes are going to be permanent and aid in the development of this community or whether, because of the poor quality of the resources, the community is at a standstill, waiting for development that can not occur because the foundation to make it work is lacking? Will this enact change in the culture to the extent that it significantly changes Maasai landscapes? Will these new interactions cause positive or negative transformations for this community?

ii. Lack of Teachers

Teachers are the backbone of any learning environment. A well-trained, dedicated teacher can help stimulate change in the students. This is always the goal at every level of education; however, in general it is not found in *Maasailand*. The present situation in Kenya, as described by a prominent Educational Official in the government, is that there are enough well-trained teachers to fill the vacancies in rural schools. However, he explained that the Kenyan government is not allowed to hire any more teachers even though there are graduates from teacher's college who have not been hired for jobs and he attributes this to IMF and World Bank sanctions. "They say we don't have enough money to do so but just the other day, they had a change of heart, now that the economy has stabilized we can hire more" (June 20 2006). At present, the Teachers Commission of Kenya can have only 235 000 teachers on its payroll and it cannot go beyond this to fill the needs of schools. The Government Official stated that "right now, the government has not given us the authority to go beyond that, but we need about 35 000 more teachers to meet the demand of FPE" (June 20 2006). There may be enough trained teachers to fill the vacancies in the school system; however, the quality of teachers who have graduated

and have yet to be hired may create even more problems for their students as they are not up to the standards of a quality teacher. To complicate matters there is a very high demand for teachers in all areas, which often means that areas such as Narok are left with the poorest quality teachers. As the professor shared with me,

Narok doesn't have electricity [no modern conveniences] therefore, good teachers don't want to go there because they get job offers from better schools and communities like Nairobi that have modern conveniences. *Maasailand* can only get bad teachers who can't get jobs elsewhere. Nobody will accept a job in *Maasailand* because of the lack of conveniences who could receive a job in other areas (May 27 2006).

Consequently, Narok lacks the bargaining power to attract well-trained and qualified teachers, further contributing to its marginalization and lack of development as a region.

Although members of the Maasai community in Narok do not entirely understand the poor quality of their teachers, they do understand that they are lacking sufficient numbers. Educators from every school cited this as a major problem that they face every day. Victor, a non-Maasai educator, said that his school is missing 5 teachers. At present his school employs 6 teachers but it has 11 classes. When asked if this was a common occurrence throughout *Maasailand*, he stated that all schools need more teachers. An average of five teachers is required for each school in the Mara; some need more and some need less (June 7 2006). As a way of coping with this situation, primary schools have taken to hiring non-government teachers or parent paid teachers. For the most part, these teachers have not been formally trained and usually have only graduated from secondary school.

Patrick, a parent-paid teacher who is Maasai, spoke of the need to have Maasai educators instead of people from other communities teaching in their schools. Since most parents in this region have not undergone formal education, they do not speak any

language other than *Maa*, which tends to mean that young children cannot speak English or Kiswahili. This is a very big problem in the early years of primary school as most teachers in this region are from different ethnic origins, which means that they probably do not know how to communicate with their students as their mother tongue is different. Patrick emphasized this need, “if another community teaches them, like a Kikuyu, they [students] don’t learn well, especially with language classes. Younger children need to have teachers who can mix the languages, like speaking *Maa* when they don’t understand English or Swahili” (June 8 2006). *Maasailand* lacks quality and quantity in their teaching staff, which is creating an environment that is not conducive to giving valuable education to students. This is prohibiting many in the community from achieving their goals of modernization and professionalism.

There is a changing recognition among many Maasai parents that well trained and qualified teachers create a successful environment despite their surroundings and that a lack of these teachers in *Maasailand* is undermining the desired development of the community, adding to its marginalization. Maasai parents are now demanding better quality education for their children, and are willing to help support the schools by paying the salaries of additional teachers. This additional expense is then passed on to the parents (Daniel, June 3 2006). On the other hand the process plays a role in preventing some children from attending school because their families are unable to pay these fees. In this sense, neoliberal tendencies of individualism are encroaching on the education system of FPE as individual reward and expenditures are valued more highly than collective achievements. As with many other issues, changing attitudes as a result of education lead to further challenges.

iii. Role Models

The Maasai in general have not been attending school for very long. There are some examples of the older generations succeeding in school and in professional life. Compared to other communities, however, it is very rare for a Maasai student to complete her or his education and become a professional. The goal for most in the Maasai community is to achieve urban professionalism; however, this is an unrealistic goal for most youths in this generation. This reality is strengthened because as Jeff and Samantha point out, there is no previous generation to help them out once they have graduated from post-secondary education. They are lacking role models and connections to help them advance, and in fact have become one of the first generations to graduate and try to become professionals (May 28 2006 and May 26 2006). Professionals in the Maasai community are relatively few compared to that of other communities in Kenya. This leads to lower levels of social capital compared to those who participate with the dominant class, as they lack connections and social ties that have allowed this dominant class to reproduce itself. The choice of the previous generation to not engage with formal education and the modern professional world has contributed to the marginalization of the Maasai community. There are few role models to help link these two different spaces, the modern and the traditional, which would help recently graduating students navigate through this new space.

Educators are the other group who spoke about role models, aside from post-secondary graduates. The educators mainly spoke about role models in terms of Maasai teachers. The majority of teachers employed at each school were from other areas, and they suggested that it would be best to encourage Maasai students to enter teachers' college and come back to their community and teach in local schools. The belief is that if

this occurred, then Maasai families would be encouraged to send their children to school as they would see the benefits of education through gainful employment. Darcy, a Maasai educator says, “Maasai teachers are role models for the community” and he continues to say, “having Maasai teach at local schools shows benefits to the community and shows what can be accomplished if children are sent to school” (June 1 2006). James, a Maasai secondary school educator reiterates this as he identifies other role models in the community besides teachers. “People, who have been educated and are getting jobs, are going back to the community and showing their success. This is motivating parents to send their children to school” (June 9 2006). Spencer, a Maasai educator, points out that the Maasai community needs leaders who are literate to be role models. “Most leaders are illiterate. There is nobody to campaign for children to be in school. Those who have literate leaders tend to educate their children more and those children tend to do better” (June 6 2006). If leaders are not educated, they probably do not understand the importance of education. They feel threatened by it or they have chosen to reject it and are probably not as encouraging as leaders who are literate. Both traditional and government appointed leaders and chiefs need to be educated. There are some in the community who are demanding it now, but not all. It seems as though it will be necessary for all elders and chiefs of the community to speak English if the community wants to integrate itself into the Kenyan economy. If this does not happen, education may change the social hierarchy of this community as the younger educated generations may be forced to take over some aspects of governance, especially those dealing with groups outside of the community. Sean, who has been mentioned before, is a university student who is also a traditional leader. He is the first traditional leader to attend university and will probably be an important role model for Maasai families as he has participated in all

of the rites of passage that are necessary to the Maasai culture and he is also attending university. Leaders like Sean need to show the community that although it is difficult to do both, it is also possible.

As attitudes change and more students are educated, the community is watching to see if those who graduate from secondary and post-secondary education will find jobs. Kenya's job market is very competitive, and it is difficult to get a job even when educated. According to a high ranking government official, "when the Maasai graduates and doesn't get a job, they get discouraged. The entire community gets discouraged" (Teacher's Commission of Kenya Official, June 20 2006). A lack of role models and professional connections compound the problems graduates face. The Maasai community is in a state of transition. Some community members are beginning to realize how marginalized their community has become because of their inability to communicate outside *Maasailand*. This has resulted in isolation and poor infrastructure including physical and human resources in the education sector which is essential to their development, integration and ability to control their own destiny. Many want change and some changes are beginning to take place with consequent further challenges to overcome.

IV. School Attendance

i. Enrolment in Formal Education

Attendance rates in Kenyan schools have been increasing since the end of the colonial era as governments have demanded that children attend school, and parents desire that their children succeed and lead a productive life. This is the case for all Kenyans but has been slower on both accounts for the Maasai. There has been less force by governments and less desire by parents that their children attend school. The 1974

Legislation Act enabled governments, and through the political system of rural areas, government appointed chiefs, to force at least one child of each family to attend school (Floyd, May 28, 2006). This was seen as an intrusion at the time as many Maasai continued to live a traditional lifestyle that did not necessitate formal education. Global influences such as the United Nations that demanded education for all children encouraged the Kenyan government to enrol all school-aged children in formal education. This included the Maasai community and Maasai children were compelled to attend school up until the late 1980s. By the end of the 1980s, the tide had changed and Maasai communities were again left to their own devices, which meant that Maasai children stopped attending school. In a group interview in Nairobi, two out of the four being interviewed were products of this legislation; the other two were too young to be a part of this system. Mike was one of the two who has since finished his education and is now a professor at a college in the United States. His account is as follows: “it wasn’t my choice, it wasn’t my parents’ either, it was the government who forced me to go to school. I was a victim of an event that was happening” (May 28 2006). He went on to say that his parents unsuccessfully tried to fight the decision. He spoke about how school interested him but he did not like the way his attendance in the system was handled. In a similar experience, Martin noted that his local chief forced his father to send him and his brother to school. Once the chief was no longer present in his area, his father removed him from school so that he could take care of the livestock. However, his brother remained in school and has since become the head teacher of one of the local schools that was visited (June 9 2006). Martin appears to resent his father’s actions as he was removed from school to carry on the traditions of the Maasai culture, while his brother is now

employed and living a different lifestyle. These examples show the contradictory costs and benefits of forced school enrolment.

School fees are one of the main obstacles that have prevented Maasai children from attending primary school. Fees and poor grades are obstacles preventing Maasai children from continuing with their education through to secondary and post-secondary education. Before Free Primary Education (FPE) was introduced by the Kenyan government in 2003, parents were the major stakeholders in their children's education. The fees were more than many parents could afford which forced poor, but willing parents to keep their children at home. Since 2003 school fees have technically been abolished leaving little excuse for parents not to send their children to school. However, this picture is not complete though FPE is helping dramatically. Jameson, a Maasai educator informed me of the actual situation.

Some parents can't pay school fees; therefore, children can't afford to attend. For the last three years because of FPE, children are coming to school in large numbers. Children no longer pay school fees at primary level. The government only pays for textbooks and teaching materials, parents must buy school uniforms, some parents still can't afford that but FPE has lessened the burden for them. It's better now (June 5 2006).

In a meeting with Daniel and Gabe where I asked about school fees, Daniel replied that it was not just uniforms that parents must pay for; parents must also pay the salaries of parent-paid teachers. Daniel informed me that every month he must send Ksh 100 (approximately CDN \$1.70) with his daughter to school to pay for the extra teachers that the government does not provide (June 2006). This is where the financial debate begins. Many Maasai say that they do not have enough money to pay these fees, and it only gets worse through secondary and post-secondary education, as the government does not

provide funding for further education. For instance, one semester of secondary education cost Ksh 7000 (approximately CDN \$118.45), which may be more than most can afford to pay. However, there are many people, both Maasai and non-Maasai, who believe that the Maasai are quite capable of paying these fees, including the cost of secondary education, but use the excuse that they do not have any money because it is tied up in livestock. Livestock are the determinant of wealth in the Maasai community holding both value in the form of economic and cultural capital, and more specifically objectified capital. As an official from the Teachers Commission of Kenya states, “Maasai have wealth in property, but they can use that excuse, but those who have gone into agriculture have no problems, those who keep animals totally would prefer to have their kids stay at home” (June 20 2006). Since the economy of the Maasai is primarily dependent on livestock, during the years of drought and the years following droughts, many livestock die and their wealth is reduced (Patrick, June 8 2006).

Among community members who had some education, the reason cited for not going further in school (either from primary or from secondary) was because they could no longer afford it. Mark who finished secondary school said that the reason he did not go on to post-secondary education, even though he wanted to, was because he could no longer afford to pay the fees (June 8 2006). This debate is interesting and I think that some Maasai do use their lack of cash as an excuse not to pay the fees of primary, secondary and post-secondary education for their children. It does appear, however, that many Maasai families would prefer to have their children enrolled in school as they are seeing the benefits of education. For this reason, I suspect that some Maasai families who live in Narok are being accurate when they say that school fees are too expensive for them to pay.

The other limiting factor for children advancing through the school system is the poor grades they receive that prevent them from going on to secondary and post-secondary education. As was noted earlier by a Maasai professor, *Maasailand* lacks foundational education in the form of pre-primary education. He spoke of the number and quality of facilities and stated there are very few preschools and nursery schools in the area, which does not allow for a strong foundation for continued education. He believes that this is the reason why Maasai students are unable to compete on national exams. In order to achieve higher standards of education, *Maasailand* must first construct quality schools for students in pre-primary education (May 27, 2006). To graduate from primary school students must take a national exam. Since the rural schools that the Maasai attend are significantly lower in quality than those in urban areas¹¹, the Maasai are at a significant disadvantage when writing these exams and many are not properly prepared and cannot pass the exams. This has to do with both the poor quality of education that students receive in this area, as well as the curriculum that is taught. Students from areas such as Nairobi can attend world class schools. They come from the culturally dominant class, which sets the educational standards in Kenya with which the Maasai are unable to compete. This is reflected in qualifying exams for higher levels of education. An official from the Teacher's Commission of Kenya informed me that about 60 % of Maasai children drop out of school between primary and secondary school and again between secondary and post-secondary education because they are unable to achieve the marks necessary to proceed (June 20 2006).

¹¹ I cannot really comment on the state of urban schools since I did not focus my research in these areas; however, I will state that there are areas of extreme poverty and wealth found in urban centres and that this is probably reflected in the state of schools.

Since the declaration of FPE educators and community members have indicated that more Maasai have enrolled their children in school. Despite this, there is still a debate among the Maasai community members, educators, and others involved in the local government, whether attendance rates have increased in rural Maasai schools because of the desire by parents for more education or as a result of government force. Kenny, one of the government's paid local chiefs¹² is responsible for forcing all children in his area to attend school. He noted that he forces many more children to go to school than the number which are sent willingly. He believes that parents dislike being coerced, but because of the law they are not allowed to remove their children from school, as he could have them arrested (June 7 2006).

Teachers and school administrators reiterate that Maasai children are being forced to attend school by governments and the school administrations. Mia, one educator, stated that children attend school "because of government force, very few parents have accepted education" (June 6 2006). Jason, a deputy head master from another school, stated that some families know the benefits of education and send their children to school,

but it's not a very big number. Those who do not know the benefits of education, they are compelled by the government. We [the school administration and teachers] need to physically bring some children to school. We go around to villages and collect school aged children who are not in school, using the chiefs, and village elders and we sometimes involve the police (June 1 2006).

In the eyes of many educators it is their responsibility to bring children to school by using force and they say that this happens routinely.

¹² A government paid local chief differs from an elder. The government paid chief reports to the government and does not have any traditional or ceremonial leadership. The system was implemented by the colonial government as a way of controlling different areas.

I discussed this question with Samantha, one of the university students who I saw frequently while in Kenya and who attended school in rural *Maasailand* and has since gone to the United States to do graduate studies. She explained that she did not think that the government (and the government paid chiefs) cared enough to force children to attend school. I asked her why she thought this way and her response was simple. You can see children herding livestock, doing village duties such as collecting water, firewood and taking care of the elders throughout the day. If the government cared enough to force the children to attend school, they would all be there. Samantha told me that she thinks that the majority of Maasai children who are attending school were sent by their parents willingly. She suggested that might only be 50% of school-aged children, but the rest are left at home and are not being forced to attend by the government (June 2006). This idea was reiterated by an official from the Deputy Chief of the Teachers Commission of Kenya when he said that the government needs to make education compulsory for all children, especially those in primary school. I responded by saying that I thought it was compulsory, to which he said, it is but it is not practiced. He thinks that there needs to be a law forcing chiefs to take all school aged-children to school and make them stay there (June 20 2006).

What Samantha and the government official from the Teachers Commission of Kenya have been referring to is what community members have titled the 50-50 split.¹³ This refers to Maasai parents seeing the need to send their children to school while at the same time wanting to maintain a traditional lifestyle. In the traditional lifestyle of the Maasai, children play a major role in contributing to the economic success of their family,

¹³ This is not a precise 50-50 split but refers to what educators and community members have stated that many families do. They send about half their children to school and keep the other half at home to do village duties.

which means that they are considered as a form of economic and objectified capital.

Children have their own duties to perform, and there are a number of chores to accomplish to allow the community to flourish. Young boys, girls and women care for the small livestock, and older boys and young men care for the rest of the livestock. Care of livestock is especially important since it is a measure of the family's wealth (See figure 7). The task is time consuming, demanding and dangerous, which leaves little time for other work. Women and girls take care of household duties that include fetching water and firewood from areas that could be quite far away, as well as cooking and taking care of the sick. These tasks should not be minimized, as they require physical effort and are

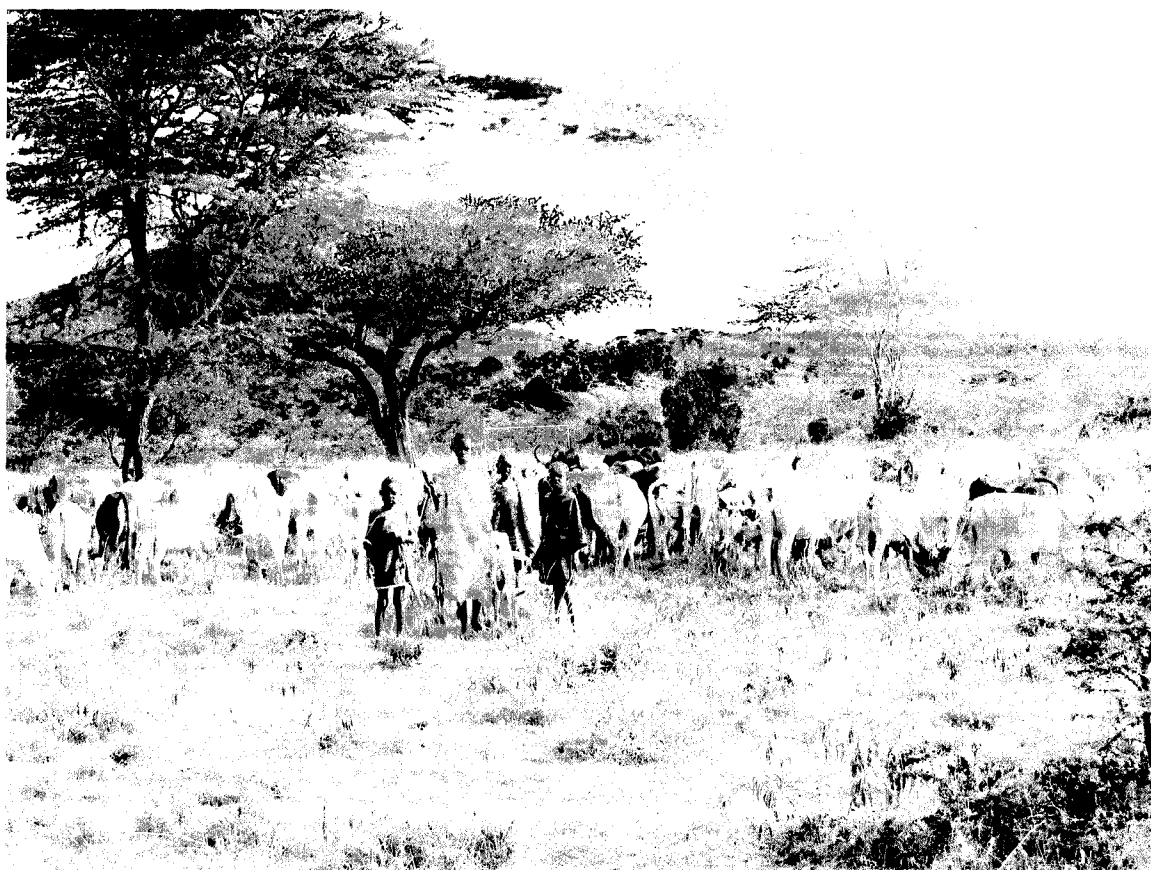


Figure 7: Young boys herding livestock. These boys are school-age and should be in school at the moment. This also shows that despite many families' claims that all of their children are in school; many are still working in a traditional fashion.

time consuming. Given the wide range of tasks to be performed and in order to ensure that a household runs smoothly, children are needed at home to assist their parents.

Many in the community promote this idea of sending some of the children to school while the others remain at home. Nancy, an elderly woman mentioned that,

there are differences between those who are educated and those who are not. Those who are educated need to go to school and complete education, and those who are not need to learn how to raise cattle and learn traditions. Therefore, I want to separate, send some children to school and keep others at home (June 3 2006).

As Nancy expressed, sending some children to school and keeping others at home happens quite frequently throughout *Maasailand*. Betty, a Maasai educator informed me that often “they keep most loved child at home and they need to be taught that all children should be educated equally” (June 1 2006). Sending the least liked children to school shows that despite parents’ willingness to modernize, parents still believe that formal education is not as valuable for their children as living a traditional life. Parents understand that when their children participate in the formal education system, they will change. Different types of knowledge are gained and understood through formal education and therefore students who participate in it, will value different ideas and capital differently from their non-educated family members. Since most parents do not have any formal education, their knowledge will be different from their children who do participate in formal schooling, which may cause conflict in understanding each other in the future.

Matt, a college-educated Maasai who works at lodges giving Maasai lectures shared another perspective. He said;

Elders say that if all children go to school, who will help them look after the animals? That’s why about 50% of children are sent to school. The remaining group look after cattle (boys) and village work (girls). Because more children

are going to school, children's duties are being carried out by mothers doing daughter's work and elders [fathers] doing son's work (June 10 2006).

By allowing children to participate in the formal education system, instead of helping the family at home, parents are losing economic capital, in the form of labour and probably cattle, since it becomes one person's responsibility to look after the livestock instead of having the entire family help out. This also may cause a split within families as formal and traditional education creates different types of knowledge and may cause tension in the future. Families may witness their children moving through different spaces structured by their respective knowledge and capital. However, Franklin, a non-Maasai educator, pointed out that "now it is changing. Parents are seeing benefits of children coming to school" (June 5 2006). For instance, Natasha, a mother of five, has taken it upon herself to take care of the livestock and other village duties in order to allow all of her children to attend school, and in return they will help her in the future (June 7 2006). Natasha sees that this institutional capital can be exchanged for economic capital, and she believes that it will benefit her entire family for her children to attend school while she takes responsibility for all their household and livestock duties.

Felicity, a Maasai woman with primary school education who appeared to be in her late teens or early twenties, had already been married with children for several years and provides an example of breaking with tradition and understanding the importance of education. Her parents were not educated and they arranged her marriage when she was very young, which stopped all her further education for her. She stated that "I won't allow to marry out my children because I know the importance of education. I will support them until they are done and won't circumcise the girls, because of education." (June 7 2006). Felicity seemed a bright and curious young woman who was frustrated by her

circumstances. She lives with her in-laws in Narok, caring for her young children in her husband's village, while he supports the family financially by working as a migrant labourer. Felicity's answer to the question "Are children who attend school losing out on gaining traditional knowledge?" was quite interesting. She stated "those who are educated don't want to participate in Maasai culture. Those who are educated don't want to be married young." This is an interesting answer because it is completely against the life that she is living. Felicity has primary education, which to many might not seem like much; however, she has been exposed to a different way of life and this has transformed the way that she views the world and has left her unfulfilled by her present circumstances.

Felicity is a great example of the complexity of change. She demonstrates the gender issues that are in place by being frustrated because her parents 'married her out' at a young age. It could be the limited education that she received, or other personal characteristics that make her curious; however, she seems to be unfulfilled with living a life in Narok, while her husband is far away earning a living. If she had grown up without education, Felicity might not feel the need to reimagine her children's future. Yet, Felicity did receive enough education to know that she enjoys it and is curious about the world. However, since her education was truncated by her parents, she feels out of place, which means that she has not been allowed to renegotiate her space on her terms. If she had been allowed to complete her education, Felicity would have the choice of negotiating her own space, be it a traditional experience or one that resembles the dominant class of Kenya or a combination of the two.

Despite the negative image that some educators illustrated regarding the desire of the Maasai community attending school, all educators did acknowledge the positive changes occurring in the Maasai community and emphasized how they relate to sending

children to school. Betty, a Maasai primary school teacher, states that “some of them know the importance of education, [it is] changing slowly” (June 1 2006). Bob, a non-Maasai educator, said that the community is beginning to understand the importance of education. He articulated that his students who understand the importance of education are convincing their parents of it and in return, parents are beginning to send the other children who remained at home. Another example of parents becoming more inclined towards education comes from Jameson, a Maasai educator. “Parents are donating to schools [development projects]. They donate both time and money, which is a sign of appreciation because they have seen the importance of educating their children” (June 5 2006). Jameson is referring to *Harambee*, a term for making development possible in your own community.

The Maasai community has embraced this idea of creating cultural, social and economic capital in their area, and have begun to create their own success through building schools, hiring teachers and devoting their own time and money to cook for their children to provide a lunch. This is done in the hopes of diversifying their income and allows families that participate in formal education the hope that the children who are sent to school will be able to get jobs and financially support the family in the future. All of these aspects show the increased desire by the Maasai community to send at least some of their children to school and supports the idea that the Maasai community wants modernization. This also demonstrates how the Maasai community is negotiating with neoliberalism at the local level and creating variants of development that serves their community.

ii. Absenteeism

Absenteeism happens when children are enrolled in school but do not attend. This occurs quite often in rural Maasai schools. As a professor states “more people have registered in school because of FPE but that doesn’t mean that they go to class” and he continued to say that “people in rural areas don’t understand education, and therefore, there is a high rate of absenteeism” (May 27 2006). Jameson, a Maasai educator, commented on this by saying “students get distracted because there are so many activities that are taking place at their homes causing problems that won’t let them go to school.” He went on further to explain:

Day scholars have so many problems because they go back to their homes, there are so many activities that are taking place at their homes and you find them having so many problems, which may make them not go to school. Sometimes their parents tell them, okay today we have this problem and that, can you stay at home to assist us in this and that? (June 5 2006).

The activities and problems that Jameson is referring to are reiterated by many educators. Linda and Joey, who are both Maasai educators, described problems of drought, living nomadically and culture. They stated that many families still practice nomadicism so children are taken out of school for periods of up to 6 months when there are droughts, in order for families to move their livestock to areas that have more resources. They also describe the many ceremonies that take place during the school year, which include circumcision and *moranism*, and can last for a couple months or the complete removal of secondary-aged boys from school if they choose to become a *moran* (June 7 2006).

Many of the parents have not attended school and therefore they are not part of the neoliberal psychological system that recognizes financial gain in the modern economy, instead of livestock accumulation, as one of the most important aspects of life. This means that they also lack an understanding of the importance of regularly attending

classes in order to learn how to achieve this end. That being said, there are issues relating to absenteeism other than culture and ceremonies that dictate the attendance rates of school-aged children in class.

A lack of quality facilities in Narok is another issue causing high rates of absenteeism in the Maasai community. The community is scattered, which forces students to walk up to 6 kilometres to get to school thereby creating a dangerous environment for school-aged children. A number of educators and community members reported that it is very dangerous for young children to walk the long distances. As Darcy, a Maasai educator suggests, the “schools don’t sufficiently serve the community, they’re scattered and the population is not big enough to fill the few schools that are here.” He continued to say that wild animals pose a problem because they are dangerous so children either do not attend or they arrive late (June 1 2006). A member of the Narok County Council stated that because of the long distances to school and the dangerous animals, many “children attend [school] later in life. The average age to start is about 8 – 10 years old and the kids feel too old by standard¹⁴ 8 to continue in school” (May 30 2006).

The suggestion of most people living in these areas is for the government or sponsors to build more boarding schools. At present there is one boarding school and one day-school in transition to becoming a boarding school. Siana Primary boarding school is currently at capacity and Sekenani Primary school is accepting only the most at-risk scholars to board but continues to be a day-school for others. Educators and community members suggest that boarding schools would eliminate many of the Maasai’s problems with education as this would eradicate high rates of absenteeism and distractions at home

¹⁴ For Kenya, the word standard is used instead of grade in primary school and is replaced by form in secondary school. For example, a child is in standard 8 not grade 8.

such as ceremonies and their participation in a nomadic life. What needs to be determined are the consequences of children boarding. Will it cause isolation from the community and a lack of cultural awareness as the children are away from home for three months at a time? This is an area that future research should focus on before more boarding schools are built in the area. In the final chapter I provide some suggestions that could help boarding schools remain culturally sensitive to the ethnic group of the area while children are boarding.

People believe that education is important and that is why their children are enrolled; however, the frequent removal of children by their parents seems to indicate that the culture of children assisting with the demands of livestock and village chores supersedes education. This suggests that while many families are engaging with the new cultured space of formal education; their cultural traditions dictate the attendance of their children at ceremonies rather than school throughout the year. Many of these families have started to change their attitudes. They understand that with education comes an increased level of institutional capital that can be converted¹⁵ into economic capital by gaining employment; however, their traditional lifestyle overrides this understanding, as their tradition of attending ceremonies and increasing their livestock productivity is seen as more valuable for social and community growth.

iii. Female Education

Traditionally, female education has been given a lower priority than male education for many reasons, including the expectation that women are meant to do village

¹⁵ Capital can be converted into different types of capital. For instance, institutional capital can be converted into economic capital. What needs to be remembered is that one does not lose institutional capital in this conversion. However, there are times when capital is lost during a conversion. For instance, when a person buys a painting, this painting can increase their cultural capital in the form of increased objectified capital, but the person loses economic capital, as they are purchasing this item (Kelly and Lusia, 2006, p. 836).

duties such as cooking, fetching water and firewood and taking care of the young and the sick. However, schooling for girls is also seen as a waste of money. This is because, traditionally, once a girl is married¹⁶, she becomes the property of her husband and his family. She is objectified capital. This means that if a family only has limited income to pay for school, they would rather not ‘waste’ it on someone who will become the property of another and who therefore will be unable to assist them financially in the future.

Since Independence, there has been a steady increase in the demand for women’s equality, especially in educational situations. As one professor explained, the issues in the Maasai culture are that,

men [are] being arrested for marrying teenagers but you are fighting an established religion. Leaders value early marriage and polygamy. The Maasai leaders are the ones who are supposed to enforce not marrying young girls but they value it, therefore, the culture is continuing. The leaders don’t try to implement changes because more wives mean more respect. (May 27 2006).

An official from the Teacher’s Commission of Kenya, who is also a Maasai community member went further and explained that “old men believe an educated girl will move out of the community, and will marry elsewhere and then they lose” (June 20 2006). He later elaborated by saying “our girls who went to school, refused to undergo that right [circumcision], and they were not accepted by the Maasai, they would not marry them. They had no other alternative but to [marry in] other communities” (June 20 2006). In the past, educated Maasai women were incompatible with their culture; this incompatibility has eased although it still persists to this day. Both sexes who are educated often find it difficult to find a spouse from their own community. This is because they do not find uneducated men and women up to their standards; however, men can remain part of their

¹⁶ A Maasai girl can be married as soon as she goes through puberty, which can happen as early as 10 years old.

community and bring their new family with them, while the women are now part of another community.

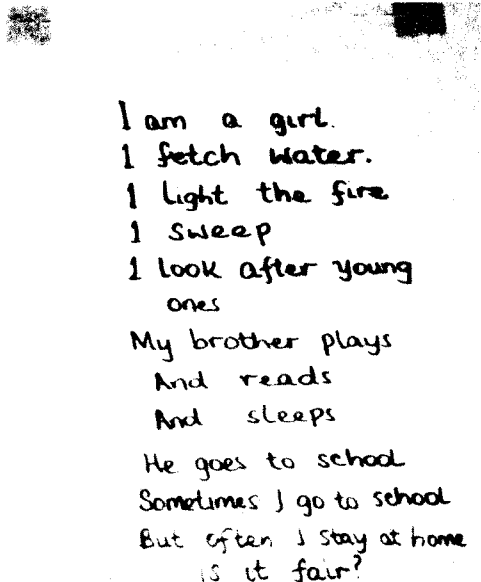
The “loss of property” when educating girls is a huge component of the lack of female education in *Maasailand*, but there are other issues that are involved. Students are taught that circumcision is wrong in science class, they are taught that polygamy is wrong in religion class and finally, they are taught that they are able to choose who and when they will marry and that this is their own, and no-one else’s, decision. These issues go against the traditional beliefs of the Maasai and are causing problems and conflict, as educated students develop new and different knowledge and experiences from that of their families. Harry, a non-Maasai educator, pointed out that some families “want girls to stay at home because school oppose[s] early marriage and female circumcision. Therefore, it is easier to leave the girls at home so parents don’t have to fight with schools when they want to remove them” (June 8 2006). Natasha goes further and says, “if [a] woman is educated, she doesn’t want to leave school to be married out,” (June 7 2006) which means that parents also hesitate to send their daughters to school to avoid opposition from them when it is time to be married.

These beliefs are changing. Felicity, a Maasai woman and mother and Natasha’s daughter-in-law, explained that she will not allow her children to be married out “because I know the importance of education. I will support them until they are done and I won’t circumcise my girls, because of education” (June 7 2006). Nancy continued with this idea and she seemed very passionate about it.

We need Maasai to change culture. We need to educate females but the elders don’t want to educate girls. Because girls can become pregnant while in primary school and they don’t want to look after the baby while their daughter is in school. They believe that girls are a waste of property because they will be married out, therefore, they are traditionally no longer part of the family

anymore. I want to change this system and have girls still be part of the family even when they are married. Traditionally, when girls get married, they leave the family. I want the community to understand that educating girls is good because they can remain part of the family and help out (June 3 2006).

These women speak very passionately about educating their children and I believe that this could be because women have more to gain from being educated than men (See figure 8). Women have little political authority in their community, and with education women develop independence and a voice that has been lacking. They have changed their lives through increasing their institutional and embodied capital, as they are learning new ideas and are being told that they are equally as important as their male counterparts.



I am a girl.
 I fetch water.
 I light the fire
 I sweep
 I look after young
 ones
 My brother plays
 And reads
 And sleeps
 He goes to school
 Sometimes I go to school
 But often I stay at home
 is it fair?

Figure 8: This poem was written by a girl in standard 4, voicing her dislike of her role in society and her community's biases in favouring the male child for education. The author is unknown but I saw this poem in 2004 at one of the schools where I did my research.

Darcy, a Maasai educator, spoke about how Nancy's ideas might soon be taking shape. His boarding school brings girls to school that would otherwise be forced into early marriage. He spoke of teachers being role models for the community and highlighting the benefits of education and continued to say that this is especially true for:

“Maasai female teachers [of which his school has a few], showing that females can earn a salary just like a man, so there is no reason to marry her off early” (June 1 2006).

Despite the incredible bias favouring male children, access for females is increasing all the time, influenced by westernization. What is meant by this is that hegemonic ideals of equality that are indoctrinated into the United Nations, and other supranational organizations of which Kenya is a member, are creating different ideals from the traditional beliefs of these communities and thus students who participate in education are conduits for communities changing their culture in line with the ideal of the developed state.¹⁷ Through education, women are becoming role models and are helping to abolish previously held beliefs of female inadequacy. At each school visited, there were women teachers and in several cases, they were Maasai. These steps take time as they are challenging established beliefs; however, as the children who are presently going through the education system grow so do the hopes of many of the women in the community for greater gender equality.

V. Conclusion

The Maasai's views on education are changing. There are families in the community who desire formal education for their children and who respect the ideas of development. The educators' views that the Maasai are not voluntarily participating in formal education does not seem to be entirely true. This chapter has shown that some Maasai families do want to participate in formal education and although they do not fully

¹⁷ The previous statement may seem to come across as a rejection of western ideas; however, I do believe in equality for all, which includes equality for women. Nevertheless, I believe that it must come from within the community and that outsiders such as myself, are unable to decide for others what they are to do and practice. I believe that the Maasai women will gain their independence and strength as more women become educated, and they will in turn change their society from within. This will cause the entire community to renegotiate their cultured space, as women begin to decide what is important for themselves within their culture. In issues like these, where I am very passionate, I attempt to stay neutral but I often come across as negative.

understand the importance of attending classes regularly, they do understand how it can aid in their quest for engagement with the modern economy. Despite being marginalized, the Maasai community is attempting to undo their isolation by participating in formal education to learn how to communicate and interact with other communities. They are attempting to modernize but they are being held back by the choices of previous generations, and structural constraints.

Education has become the newest concern for the community as it both threatens their lifestyle and fosters a desire and curiosity for western ideals and endeavours. This chapter has shown that while some families are sending their children to school and thus are embracing change and modernization, there are others who contend that their traditional lifestyle is best. Despite the desire of individuals and the overall community, education is becoming a pervasive influence in all aspects of their life. Education has and is becoming a globalizing force as the world community has labelled it a human right. This means that because Kenya is a member of organizations like the United Nations and has participated in world summits focussing on education, they have pledged to uphold the standards for education that the world has set. The Maasai are themselves experiencing the changes that a westernized formal education system is introducing to their personal and communal space.

Chapter 6: Maasai Identity and how it is Changing with the Onset of Formal Education

I. Introduction

This chapter begins to unravel how the Maasai community defines itself and how this definition is changing. The introduction of Free Primary Education in 2003 has allowed many more in the community to access formal education and thus has started to contribute to the changing culture of the Maasai community. This is evident in the changing attitudes of the community, parental goals, changes in physical appearance and housing, and finally, the changes in agriculture, livestock and the pursuit of ‘fast money’. The second section of this chapter is a discussion of how incompatible the formal education system is with the culture of the Maasai community and offers perspectives from community members and others on how to make the system work for the community.

II. Maasai Identity

There are many definitions of the Maasai community and most of them involve the words ‘nomadic pastoralists.’ Although these words are very important, they are not the only way to define this community. It is important therefore to discuss what defines a Maasai and then to move on to define their community. This background will allow the reader to understand how the Maasai define themselves and how this definition is changing. The question asked of all Community Members was “What makes a person Maasai?” It is interesting to note the similarities and differences in each answer.

In interviews in Nairobi, four Maasai university students, who are originally from the Narok district but are living in other areas such as Nairobi and the United States to

further their education, defined Maasai as being born to parents of Maasai decent, and specifically to fathers who are Maasai. These four students did allow cultural aspects to help define their identity but stated that if you currently reside in *Maasailand* that does not mean that you are Maasai. One participant, Sean, the first traditional Maasai leader to attend university, said that dressing, activities such as raising livestock and participating in cultural events and where you live don't make you Maasai. "It doesn't make you Maasai if you do what the Maasai do; only birth makes you Maasai." (May 26 2006). This biological definition is of interest because the other community members from Narok believed that a person could be Maasai if not born to Maasai parents. They believed that one could become Maasai by living in the community and going through the rites of passage and participating fully in traditional Maasai life. However, it is possible that the university students were frustrated with people pretending to be Maasai in order to reap the benefits of their community and were sceptical of people who called themselves Maasai but could not prove it biologically.

Narok District is presently under-developed compared with many other districts and one example of this is that the Maasai have not participated in education until recently. In order to ensure Maasai participation, a quota system was implemented to encourage Maasai students to continue with their education; however, people from other districts are moving into Narok under the pretense that they are Maasai, and taking the spots that were dedicated for the Maasai community (NCC, May 30 2006). Outsiders also come into the district pretending to be Maasai to get jobs working in lodges and the Maasai Mara National Reserve. The result is that since resources are scarce at present in *Maasailand*, a normally very welcoming community has put up barriers and is

constructing a definition of itself that is more narrow than usual because of resource access concerns.

In an interview that took place in Nairobi with highly educated Maasai community members, both accounts were taken into perspective and the individuals worked through the dilemma themselves. Mike illustrates the answer very well. He begins by stating that the reason why having your father be Maasai helps to determine who you are is because it determines where you live. Women typically move to where their husband lives, allowing their children to be brought up in that community, understanding that community's identity and learning their value system and ceremonies:

But the toughest question is that if both your parents are Maasai and they moved to the United States, or even here in Nairobi, and you never went to *Maasailand*, and you don't speak the language, you know nothing about the value system of the Maasai, would you still qualify them as a Maasai? You'd have to have all these sense of traits, values, belief systems, identity, really to be a Maasai and that's what defines all of us. We need all components to make someone Maasai...And I think that's true about any other society, if there are values and aspects of the culture that you lack, then you really don't fit that identity and anybody can challenge your identity at that point. (May 28 2006).

To solidify their point, Floyd asked me if I married a Maasai, would I still be Canadian? My answer was 'yes'. Mike then asked if I was born in Kenya, and both of my parents were Canadian, what would I be then? To which I answered that I would be Kenyan, because I wouldn't know any other way of life. This, Mike suggested, answered the original question of biological importance, that it is less important to have biology to identify one as Maasai, and more important to follow the traditions, culture and belief system of a community (May 28 2006). The Maasai identity is spatialized in the sense that in order to be truly Maasai, one must know the ceremonies and traditions of the culture. In order to live like a Maasai, a person must be with the Maasai. Many people

pointed out that a person is able to marry into the community and this is acceptable because once the person starts to live where the Maasai live, they become part of the community, practicing traditional, social and cultural rites in Maasai space.

Community members from Narok that consisted of Maasai participants, who had different levels of education, had very similar answers to this question. A typical answer came from Justin who said, Maasai is the name for their culture. When pressed on what the culture is, he continued by saying the cutting of ears, circumcision, the style of dress, keeping animals, eating only blood and milk, making houses out of cow dung and sticks, and beds out of animal skins (June 10 2006). The first three answers are physical features and exclude one typical answer, which is the removal of teeth. Traditionally, it is easy to distinguish a Maasai (See figure 9) as they cut slits in their ears at both the top and bottom to create holes which they then expand through the use of earrings made by Maasai women. The removal of the front two bottom teeth also occurs as does circumcision for both males and females. The dress of a traditional Maasai person is called a *shukas*, and is typically a red material which is wrapped around the body. Variations of this do occur, but generally it is worn by both men and women.

One of the major responses to the previous question that Justin missed was ceremonies. Aaron and Daniel both touch on the importance of ceremonies to the culture of the Maasai and use the ceremonial importance to define their community (See figure 10). Aaron states that what makes a person Maasai is strictly following their culture, which includes circumcision, attending all ceremonies and keeping lots of cattle (June 4 2006). Daniel further strengthens the argument of the centrality of ceremonies when he states that being a *moran* is a rite of passage and is the Maasai's school, as they are taught

how to follow the traditions of the culture (June 3 2006). Though Daniel is speaking only of one specific ceremony he is showing the importance that is given to them all.



Figure 9: This is the traditional dress of a Maasai woman. Notice the earrings, and other jewellery, as well as her dress.

Not all interviewees said that cows were what defined the Maasai as a community. Through reading and talking with community members I believe that livestock are essential in defining their community and this was clarified by Lanny, when he explained that all cows in the world belong to the Maasai. In a folk story told to young children, it is divulged that *Engai* (or God) entrusted all the cows and other livestock to the care of the Maasai (June 3 2006). After Lanny shared this story with me, it became clear that being Maasai and raising livestock is synonymous, and people probably took it for granted that raising livestock was a defining activity for the Maasai. This would explain why some

might not explicitly identify raising livestock as a defining component of their community. In speaking with community members it became clear that “all traits,



Figure 10: These two pictures are demonstrating the importance of ceremonies. The ceremony that is taking place is the naming of the *moran* group and is very important. Maasai come from all around to participate and construct houses, such as on the right, since they will reside there for months. The picture on the left shows ceremonial dress and the greeting dance by the Maasai.

cultural, biological and community identity are all melded together and all dependent on each other to create the identity of the Maasai” (Mike, May 28 2006). Since all of these traits depend on each other to create the identity of the Maasai, it reiterates the fact that Maasai identity is in some way dependent on spatial organization, especially in relation to being able to hold cattle and practice common rites that involve other Maasai. It is not a cultural identity that one can practice in isolation. Understanding Maasai identity is important to the remainder of this thesis, as it gauges change when viewed with the impact of the formal education system.

III. Changes in the Maasai Community Influenced by Access to Formal Education

i. Changing Attitudes

As has been discussed in the previous chapter, the Maasai community is changing their attitude towards education which in turn is changing other aspects of their culture. Kenny, a Maasai elder and government paid chief stated that people are changing. “They don’t want to beg, as they did before. Now they want to fight for their own life and this is because of education” (June 7 2006). This is an interesting comment from Kenny, as it shows one of the main functions of neoliberalism. Neoliberalism is borne from the Protestant work ethic and creates the idea of free will and therefore the desire for individual freedoms (Lane, 2006, p. 12; Harvey, 2006, p. 42). This self-sufficiency is changing the community, as it is evolving into one that more resembles the dominant culture of neoliberalism in the country. People are learning that individualism is valued over community, and thus there is a concern throughout Kenya that communal values are becoming degraded (Koech, 1999, p. 25). Kenny is not educated and neither are many people from his age-group; however, as previously mentioned, Kenny is responsible for taking school age children to school if they are not enrolled. He said that “children, who I have forced to go to school and received education and then they have become employed, have come to me in appreciation afterwards” (June 7 2006). He goes further and says that “when old people [Maasai elders] who are not supporting education die, those who are enlightened and accepting of education will come and show the importance of education to the community” (June 7 2006). Kenny is implying that members of the older generations do not understand the benefits of education and thus, they oppose it. Others from the community have alluded to this idea; however, those who I interviewed from this generation stated that education was important for the development of their

community. If Kenny is correct, and he probably is regarding some of the senior elders, this is a negative internal pressure and it can be very conflicting for members of this community. As Kenny states, the Maasai are very respectful of their elders. “Whatever these leaders advise, the community respects” (June 10 2006). So despite recognizing the benefits of education, elements of the Maasai community are still being influenced by the senior elders, some of whom oppose formal education. The senior elders are a group of men who grew up in a different time. Some of them understand the importance of formal education and encourage those from younger generations to participate in it; however, there are others who do not understand the importance of education and still others who understand the system and have decided to reject it in favour of a traditional lifestyle. As with any community that respects its elders, it is hard to move away from the past traditions and engulf themselves in a new way of living, especially when they are being given conflicting information regarding education. However, as Kenny stated, as the older generations begin to die, a new generation that is more inclined towards education will begin to govern and encourage their children to attend school.

Cultural change is a gradual process; however, there are many in the community that acknowledge that there are negative aspects that should be removed in order for the community to adapt to their present situation. The aspects of the culture that should be removed depends on who is speaking. All who I spoke with about female circumcision, except one non-Maasai educator, stated that it should be removed from the culture. Some believe that *moranism* teaches negative characteristics such as stealing because of cattle raiding and should therefore be removed. Others believe that cattle raiding should be removed from the culture but not *moranism*, as it teaches other very positive strategies for traditional learning. Polygamy was another element that most people believe should be

removed, as well as ‘marrying women out’ at a young age. That being said, there are also many attributes of the Maasai culture that are considered positive by all who witness them, for example, the strength, richness and unity that the culture emanates.

Daniel, a Maasai elder who attended school until standard 8 and who was also my guide while in Narok, is a great example of cultural change because of his access to education. He shared the effects that it is having on his and his families’ lives. Daniel’s father has died, leaving him as the eldest, and head of the family. With this comes the responsibility of finding wives for his younger brothers.

I told them to try only having one wife first because life is difficult and more difficult when you have more than one wife and her additional children. I want all of my children to go to school and therefore, I won’t marry anymore wives. Which means I will have less children and can afford to send them to school. Before, a man could have five wives and five cows and he would have enough to feed his family. Now children want ugali [non-traditional food] which takes money (June 3 2006).

Daniel’s choice of marrying only one wife and encouraging his brothers to do the same is profound. This represents the gradual breaking of tradition that is occurring as more people participate in formal education.

Daniel’s choice to marry only one woman also shows the influence of modernization. There is an acknowledgment of the costs involved in having children which requires renegotiating aspects of Maasai culture and how status is bestowed on the individual. Food stuffs from around the world are creeping into the daily diet of Maasai children through exposure at school and through tourists at lodges. Children often ask tourists for sweets or other types of food and are now asking for them at home. This is reinforcing consumerism and engagement with the global economy, and in fact, increases the desire of some Maasai families to earn economic capital through participating in the cash economy in order to buy food stuffs for their children. Again, Daniel is participating

in western ideals by having only one wife, as he has decided that it is necessary for his family to partake in the consumption of education. Education can function to reproduce neoliberalism, not just because of what it teaches, but because it is a product or service waiting to be consumed that entails both individual and public costs, but is expected to produce individual benefits.

Through the decision that Daniel is making, he is renegotiating his and his family's cultural and spatial identity. For one, he is breaking with tradition and not marrying more than one woman, which creates a single family home that is probably quite different for the Maasai community than a polygamous home. There may be more time to spend together as a family but it might require more work for each individual as there are fewer people to gather materials and take care of the livestock. Secondly, he is forcing his family to renegotiate their own space since he intends that his children will be educated.

To change the attitudes of the previous generation could take a great deal of time; however, many of those who I interviewed from that generation had already changed their perspective on education. Nathalie, a non-educated grandmother said that she did not go to school and she is too old to become educated now, but "if education was something that I could buy in a store, I would buy it" (June 3 2006). Nathalie and others from her generation are changing their attitudes towards formal education. This change may take generations to solidify; however, there are examples of breaking with tradition occurring presently that will cause the renegotiation of personal and communal spaces.

ii. Parental Goals

Parental goals are a good way to gauge change in a community as most parents, regardless of where they live, want their children to live a better life than they did. The

specific questions that were asked were designed to decipher if Maasai parents wanted their children to live a better life than they had but continue living in a traditional style, or to live a better life but with a more modern lifestyle. The main question asked was “what are your goals for your children or future children?” All of those who were asked this question answered that they wanted their children to be educated and most answered just like Keith, “I want all my children to go to school and get jobs so they can assist me” (June 7 2006). Some answered that they would like their children to be teachers, nurses and secretaries for their female children and park wardens, hotel managers, teachers, pilots, doctors and government leaders for their male children. However, what is interesting is the answer to the question of whether they would like their children to live in the same area where they grew up and live a similar lifestyle to that of their parents. For instance, Nelly answered that she “doesn’t want [her] children to have this lifestyle. I want them to move away and work for themselves” (June 8 2006). Felicity states, “I want them to be educated but to remain Maasai, remain in Kenya. Not in this region, but close enough to work and help me” (June 7 2006). Nevada states, “I don’t want children to be married early. I want them to be educated, to find jobs and be employed as teachers. I want my children to marry outside the Maasai community so that my children can help change the culture” (June 3 2006). The other type of response is the desire for children to have better jobs but remain part of the Maasai community, remain living in this area but with a better lifestyle. This is Frank’s response.

I want them to show community the results of education and show that they are enlightened. I also want them to assist me to educate the children. I want them to be employed by the government and depend on themselves. I want them to live better than I am living but build homes in this area (June 9 2006).

Daniel shared a similar response. “I want my daughter to be a secretary or nurse and my boys to be teachers. I want my children to follow the traditions but build different houses and still raise livestock and live in this same area” (June 3 2006). Martin stated that he wants his children to be educated and to have a good life. “I want them to complete school and get a job but live here, in this area” (June 9 2006). What is interesting about these two different groups is that it is mostly women who want their children to be educated and move from this area and it is all men who want their children to be educated get a job and live in this area. As has been mentioned before, it seems as though men want to keep their children close by because they have more social capital than women through strong community ties, and they have the status in the community and a voice that women do not have. The women want their children to move away as they are the disadvantaged group in this community and these mothers see more prospects for their children the more they are removed from their community.

It also seems more realistic for parents to want their children to move away from their community if they want them to be educated and become professionals. This region has a low density, scattered population and is lacking physical infrastructure. This allows livestock and wildlife to wander unhindered by roads and other development. Since this community is under-developed, there are not many opportunities for educated people in Narok outside of the tourist industry, and these positions tend to be taken by outsiders. What I think is hard for many parents to understand is that creating opportunities for their children to become professionals in this area would result in a dramatic change of their landscapes. The entire community would have to renegotiate their communal space, as open land would be converted into towns and development projects. In contrast to traditions, families would live a permanent lifestyle in single-family homes without any

communal land, thus causing a major cultural shift that would transform the open physical landscape. The Maasai community needs to be realistic when it comes to job opportunities in their community and any development projects must be carefully planned so as not to disrupt the wildlife population. Unfortunately, the Maasai are part of the tourist experience and their community is consumed as part of the landscape. Since tourism creates a significant amount of revenue for the country, the Maasai may be forced by the Kenyan government to continue living in a traditional manner so as not to disturb the surrounding environment. This demonstrates one of the many contradictions with the education system. Education can supply the tools for a good life, but realistically can it be maintained in this region? The Maasai cannot be both professionals and live a traditional lifestyle in this area. A realistic option would be to further develop the tourist industry but to do it in a sustainable manner that allows employment but not the destruction of the environment. Creating these employment opportunities is essential for the sustainable development of this community. I would also recommend reserving employment opportunities for the community in the tourist industry in order to allow the Maasai to live and earn a decent wage in their area. I have suggested this because if the community decides to develop other industries, the tourist sector in Narok could be destroyed. As has been mentioned before, Maasai communities are not destructive to their local environment; however, other industries are. If the Maasai are not given opportunities of making a decent wage in their community, they may be forced to develop more destructive industries. This is why I suggest holding position in the tourist sector in Narok for the Maasai, to prevent other industries from taking over, which would probably led to the destruction of the tourist industry¹⁸. The only concern with this option is that there

¹⁸ I speak more about this plan in the concluding chapter; however, I should mention that the tourist

may not be enough jobs for all of the children from the Maasai communities. Other forms of development in the area to create job opportunities would mean that wildlife and livestock would decline, causing a decline in the tourist sector, which by far is the main income earning opportunity of the area.

If most Maasai children become educated and we assume that it is nearly impossible to employ half of that population in Narok, what does that mean for the other half? The Maasai themselves define their community as needing to be part of cultural events, which places emphasis on space, living from the land and their surrounding environment. Would the culture be destroyed if half the population became educated and moved to the city? In their present definition of themselves, I would say yes, but as external pressures act upon this community, I believe that the Maasai will adjust their definition of themselves. As their culture and society interacts with neoliberal tendencies through economic globalization, the community will choose the path of development that allows them to create a hybrid solution, allowing them to participate in either lifestyle or a variation of the two.

iii. Physical Appearance and Housing

The notion of objectified and embodied capital shows that with formal education comes a desire to change in ways that are not specifically taught in school. Schools do not teach only academics but also teach the culture of the dominant class in the country. This form of teaching changes the students from different classes, and teaches them how to live in and interact with the dominant culture.

industry demands post-secondary education, which means that these positions may not be filled by Maasai community members for some time. But they could probably work as trained guides right now as they have great knowledge of their surrounding environments.

Traditional clothing for a Maasai is either wearing *shukas*¹⁹ [cloth] or skins, which are then wrapped around a person's body. *Shukas* tend to be bright colours and for men tend to be red (See figure 11). A common answer is from Aaron, "I now dress in different style. Because I am educated, I know different styles of dress." (June 4 2006). The different style of dress that Aaron is referring to is wearing "modern" clothes, which for the Maasai are pants and shirts. Observing the community and interviewing many different people, I witnessed that most people who were educated wore modern dress. The university students interviewed in Nairobi were all wearing pants and shirts and even some of those who were in Narok and had minimal education chose modern clothes, although others chose traditional dress. Daniel, my guide, who has primary school education, wore traditional clothing while we were in Narok; however, when we were in Narok city, he wore modern dress. This is an interesting component as Daniel is negotiating his space and the way that others view him depending on where he is. He feels more comfortable in traditional clothing; however, when leaving his area, he feels as though he should be conforming to his surroundings so as not to feel out of place. In school he learned to conform to the culture of the dominant class in Kenya and when out

¹⁹ Presently *shukas* are the traditional clothing of the Maasai. In the past skins were worn until cloth became the dominant form of dress.

of his comfort region, Daniel wore modern clothes.



Figure 11: Gabe is dressed in modern clothes (first from the left) while everyone else is dressed in traditional clothing except for the children who wear whatever is around. Daniel (fourth from the right) is wearing a *shukas* and is dressed as an elder would dress. Notice the beads the women are wearing.

Another physical difference for many is the decision to mark their body.

Traditionally, Maasai are visibly distinguishable by their markings. These include piercing or cutting of ears, both at the top and bottom, which creates a large hole and jewellery, is hung from these holes. It also includes the removal of the two front, bottom teeth, which can be seen when they speak. Mark, who attended secondary school, explained how his access to education has changed his lifestyle. “I leave some culture due to education, for example piercing of ears and *moranism*” (June 8 2006). Again, as with wearing traditional clothing, the more education someone has, the less likely they are to

cut their ears or remove their teeth, they desire to increase their embodied capital by conforming to the physical standards of the dominant culture in Kenya.

Another visible sign of change for the Maasai community is the style of houses that are built. These are changing and many have related the changes to education. Nathalie says it well, “those who are educated build houses differently, they use iron sheet [for their roofs]. People who are educated like to show the sign of change” (June 3 2006). There are many aspects of renegotiating one’s space associated with the change of building materials and they include a more permanent lifestyle. The ability to afford these new materials creates the need for money and thus those who choose these materials are required to engage with the cash economy. The Maasai are now living a more permanent lifestyle, which encourages the use of new building materials like cement walls and iron sheet roofs (See figure 12 and 13). Some say that the use of new building materials is not learned in school but since they are educated they can choose these new materials and most do, to show social distinctions. “I have a bed with a mattress, a box, iron sheet and cement house. I choose these things because I am learned. This wasn’t learned in school but because of exposure.” He goes on to say that his school was made of these building materials and he saw that they had a good foundation (Justin, June 10 2006). However, Joey, a Maasai educator does state that building with these materials is taught in school. (June 7 2006).

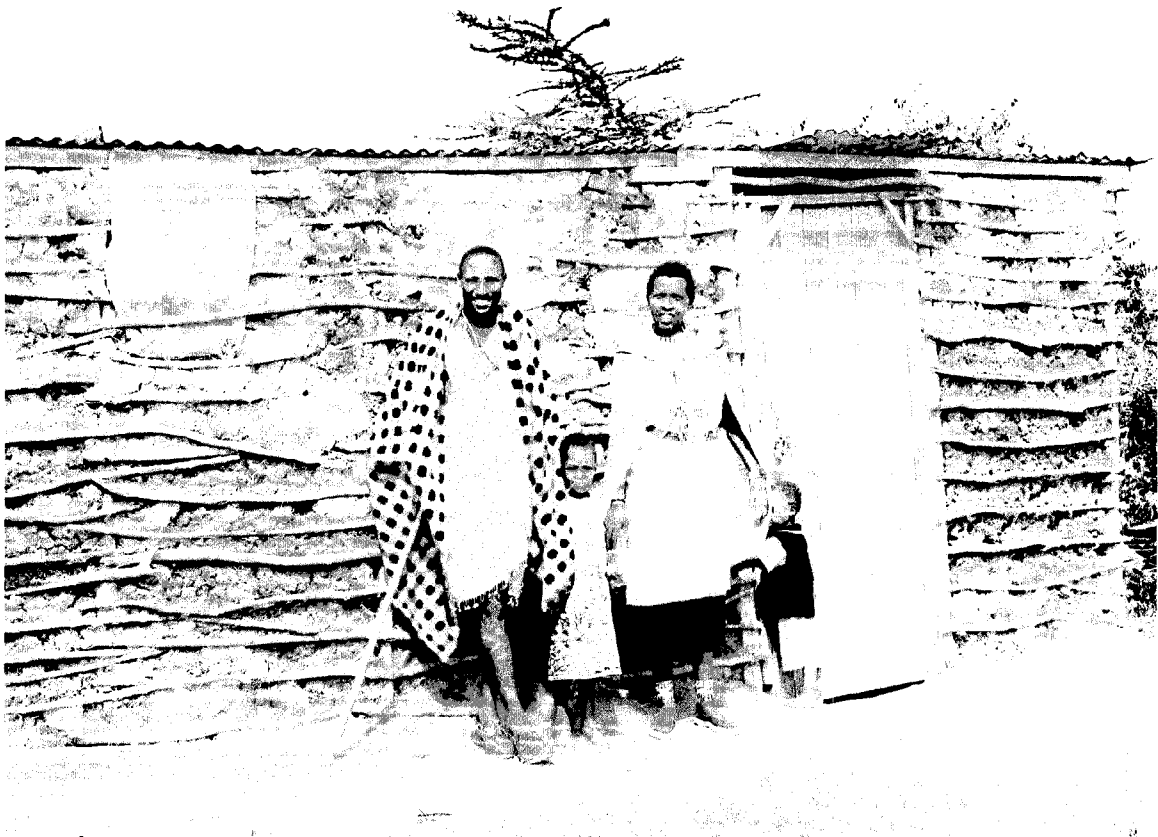


Figure 12: Daniel with his family in front of a modern house. Notice the iron sheet as a roof, the wooden door with a lock and the height of the building. In other instances, the walls would be made of cement; however, this is not used for Daniel's house.

There are some very important points regarding using cement and iron sheets - these new materials allow the inside to stay a lot drier during the rainy season. Even though I was told that cow dung is waterproof, I have witnessed women rushing out of their houses in rain storms to patch up roofs when water begins to leak through. The use of new technologies such as cement and iron sheets in the construction of buildings has been introduced through educational channels. These new technologies will continue to increase as the Maasai continue with their education and strengthen their links to the dominant class of Kenya, which in turn strengthens their links to development and modernization.



Figure 13: In the foreground of this picture is the stick foundation to a new traditional house, in the background is Daniel's modern house.

Whether it is learned in school or not, those with more education tend to live in more modern houses and dress in different ways and it could be just what Nathalie says, that those who are educated like to show it off and, therefore, they use different materials. Those who have become educated desire to change their objectified capital by utilizing these materials. Education is influencing the Maasai community, its building structures and dress, through both direct teaching and exposure to new materials.

iv. Agriculture, Livestock and the Pursuit of 'Fast Money'

There is a debate about whether the Maasai historically have been agriculturalists. Some researchers believe that some cultivation took place throughout the Maasai's history, while others believe that they traded for food stuffs from surrounding neighbours

who were cultivators. Others believe that the Maasai relied solely on food stuffs from their livestock (Galaty, 1982, p. 9; Berntsen, 1976). Regardless of the outcome of this debate, it is widely accepted that the Maasai community used livestock as the primary source of food and income, and rarely used agriculture.

Agriculture is an important element of development for the Maasai community, as it allows them to earn an income from different sources and grants them a security net during times of drought and disease with their livestock. For many communities, learning to cultivate is either unnecessary as they live close to stores or is second nature, as they have been performing these tasks for generations. The Maasai are different. Their livelihood has not revolved around cultivation and instead, for many in the community, it is innovative and noteworthy.

Without exposure to cultivation or learning in a formal setting it is very difficult to learn how to grow crops. As well, in many areas of *Maasailand*, crop cultivation is not feasible for environmental reasons such as a lack of precipitation and the abundance of wildlife. Speaking to many villagers in close proximity to the Maasai Mara National Reserve, it was perceived as ridiculous to attempt to grow crops as the wildlife, especially elephants, can consume an entire field in one night. When Jack, a secondary school graduate was asked if he grows crops he stated, “no, because of the wildlife. The elephants will destroy it” (June 3 2006). There are several of these regions that are inhospitable to agriculture. On the other hand, the area that surrounds the only secondary school in this region has been growing crops for some time. Frank, a Maasai educator who was interviewed as a community member, and lives in this area stated, I grow crops, I learned how to in school. “Most people from this region are taught by other people how to grow crops, they learn through exposure” (Frank, June 9 2006). Martin continues this

by saying that the reason why people are growing crops in this area is that “the educated people who were before us, started planting and then we followed them” (June 9 2006). I believe that the reason this area is growing crops so readily is because of its close proximity to the secondary school and its distances from wildlife. Since it is in secondary school where agriculture is primarily taught, it seems as though the area has been exposed to agriculture for sometime. For the remainder of this section, these regions are omitted from the analysis as they either are unable to grow crops because of wildlife or have been growing crops for generations.

In all other areas that were visited, agriculture has only taken place when a family member has or is attending secondary school. One day, I purposefully set out to find someone in the Maasai community who is involved in agriculture. I met Aaron. He attended secondary school and has since moved back to his area to begin cultivation. He explained it for me at length.

Do you grow crops?

Yes, it was learned in school. I saw those who finished school ahead of me grow crops and I wanted to know how. I was taught in school how to grow crops. They taught me about the climate, dry season and rainy season. They taught me when to plant, about the soil, which soils favour which crops, about fertilizers and about the different types of seeds. When you're in Form 4, you receive a small plot of land and you learn how to grow everything, including crops and trees (June 4 2006).

From Aaron's description, it can be seen that there is quite a complex process to be learned. Seeing his crops, he appears to be quite successful (See figure 14). Secondary school educators stated that it is mandatory to take agriculture in Forms 1 and 2 and it is



Figure 14: Daniel, Aaron and Gabe in front of Aaron's crops of Maize (white corn).

an elective in Forms 3 and 4. Thus, you are able to take four years of classes related to agriculture, with some classes focusing also on animal husbandry (Mitch, June 9 2006).

Nelly is a mother who lives in an area that has recently begun cultivating. When asked if she cultivated, she said “yes, I saw others who were doing it. I went outside the District and saw others cultivating. I had the mind to do it myself because I saw the benefits. I was assisted by my children, the ones that are in school” (June 8 2006). As Jeff states, “education enabled the use of resources. Education made us [Maasai community] realize how to make use of the land. Long time, we used to just look at the land as a place to graze the livestock and nothing else. Now we are cultivating” (May 28 2006). As more people become educated, they will share with their families and villages the techniques of

cultivation, which will hopefully benefit the entire community and allow them to develop and modernize to the extent that they might choose.

As already mentioned, in some of the agricultural classes the Maasai are also taught about proper care for their livestock. They are taught what medicines to use and how to administer them (Bob, June 2 2006), how to manage disease and how to improve their livestock herds (Jameson, June 5 2006). From a community member's perspective the effects of education on raising livestock are beneficial. Nathalie states, "for animals that we have, it enables us to give proper treatment to sick animals" (June 3 2006). Education in this sense is reinforcing traditions and raising their economic capital by increasing the health of their animals.

What is interesting is the change that is occurring to the lifestyle, and thus the culture of the Maasai since agricultural classes have been taught in secondary schools. As a Maasai Education Minister states,

The young people don't like animals. You need to follow them for five years before you get one bull to sell instead of six months and you get wheat to sell. So our animals are getting smaller because of cultivation....We are no longer just keeping livestock. We are doing agriculture and horticulture. The biggest problem now, is more people are going for agriculture, so the animals are diminishing.

I asked: Is there a direct relation between education and smaller numbers of animals?

Yeah, because those that are enlightened, [those who have gone to school] they prefer to go for faster income so they go for agriculture. If you have 100 acres, and you used to keep 50 animals, then you cultivate 50 acres that reduces the number of animals by half so that you can keep the animals without overgrazing. So the relationship is that many people are going for fast money, which is agriculture (June 20 2006).

Another interesting comment came from a member of the Narok County Council who stated that people are leasing their land for money, which was learned in school (NTC,

May 30 2006). This also causes a decline in the number of animals for the same reason that the Education Minister stated; reducing the amount of land that one is able to use reduces the number of animals the land can accommodate without overgrazing.

Health and nutrition are taught in school through science classes and have had a dramatic effect on the diet and landscape of the Maasai community. For example, Natasha states that “educated people don’t want to just drink milk, they want to eat *ugali*²⁰” (June 7 2006). Daniel tells me that he now boils milk instead of drinking it fresh and this was taught in home science (June 3 2006). Nevada, one of the only educated women in her village stated that she learned different ways of cooking from home science. “Cooking in the house, I cook with vegetables and I know how to make bread, unlike the other women” (June 3 2006). Frank, a Maasai educator notes that education “changed the way Maasai live. I don’t drink blood and milk anymore. I eat *ugali*, cabbage and potatoes. I learned this in school” (June 9 2006). This change in diet seems minor; however, it has really changed the health of many in the community and the culture in general. Health is taught in school, which means that children are taught about nutrition as well as being taught how to cultivate in their areas. The need and desire for these new foods, *ugali*, cabbage, potatoes and others, has created a need to integrate themselves into the cash economy, thus forcing change on their traditional system. The other option is to begin to cultivate these foods themselves, and although this is an option for some, it is impossible for others, leaving the cash economy as their only option. Participating in the cash economy through leasing their land or beginning to cultivate means that the traditional economy of the Maasai will be permanently changed causing them to

²⁰ *Ugali* is a porridge substance that is made from *maize* or white corn.

renegotiate their communal space and their culture. No matter which approach, the demand for non-traditional foods will change the landscape of the Maasai Mara forever.

Another method that Maasai use in order to make money is participating in cultural *bomas*. A cultural *boma* is a traditional village that is built for the benefit of tourists (See figure 15). The Maasai demonstrated how to set up the village, explained why everything was placed where it was, and what everything meant. The community performed traditional dances, showed us how to make jewellery, taught us how to build houses, taught us to milk cows and carry firewood and they bled a cow. These are all traditional events but displayed as a tourist attraction to raise money. The problem is that there are so many of these cultural *bomas* that most villages are not making any money or “fast money” from these ventures. Mike commented on these,

cultural *bomas* aren't even tradition. They're [the Maasai who participate] trying to live a life that they don't know. They think that they'll make money but they don't. They think it's better for them to drop out of school and work in a cultural *boma* because they'll make money but it doesn't happen and then they have nothing because they don't have education (May 27 2006).

The reason why so many people are attracted to these cultural *bomas* is because of the desire and necessity for money in order to purchase non-traditional foods and to live a modern lifestyle. Spencer, a Maasai educator expressed his fears.

Tourism is another factor making children stay at home. In cultural *bomas* they [Maasai participants] receive only a small amount of money and therefore they drop out of school. There are four cultural *bomas* surrounding this school and we are losing children at a rate that is really scary. This is a problem for all schools in this area (June 6 2006).



Figure 15: These are all pictures taken at a cultural *boma* in 2004 (Study Abroad program through McGill University). In the top left picture I am being taught how to string sticks together to build a house. The picture below is of Maasai women performing a song (friends from my group joined in) and dance. The top picture on the right is a group of *morans* performing their traditional dances, typically involving jumping. Notice the first moran on the right. He is wearing the mane of a lion as a hat. Traditionally this means that he was the last to kill a lion. The picture below that is of me, being taught how to milk a cow.

Mike shared one of the reasons why many people have resorted to leasing and/or cultivating their land or working in a cultural *boma*.

The effects of education in this area are very negative. Not because Maasai choose it but because most kids receive education that doesn't empower them enough, therefore, they can't venture into the modern economy. They go back to the villages but are no longer traditionalists. They can't get jobs, so they're just there (May 30 2006).

This is a major fault of the education system. In order to create ‘good western citizens’, Kenya must create economic opportunities for its youths; enabling them to participate in the cash economy. These pursuits of ‘fast money’ are enabling this participation; however, is this process creating an environment that is sustainable? Or is the pursuit of ‘fast money’ creating an environment that will implode once all of the land has been cultivated and the supply of cultural bomas has saturated the market?

A further fault of the formal education system is that this system does not promote and respect the culture of the Maasai; students are left feeling as though they no longer want to participate in a traditionalist lifestyle but are unable to participate in a modern lifestyle either. There are many people who share Mike and Spencer’s fears, that as exposure to a new and modern lifestyle continues to present itself, more Maasai community members will begin to participate in activities that they believe will guarantee them ‘fast money’ instead of working their way through the education system. This is a catch 22 scenario. Because of the poor quality of schools in rural *Maasailand*, students are not able to achieve grades that are high enough to be admitted into high school and post-secondary education, and therefore, they are unable to get jobs. So what is the best way forward - to lease and cultivate land and drop out of school to perform in cultural *bomas* for “fast money” to try and achieve a modern lifestyle, or try your best in a low quality school system that does not guarantee any employment afterwards? Or, is the best route to ignore all else and remain a traditionalist, herding livestock for the rest of your life? The answers to these questions need to be left to the community to decide but I believe that a combination of all three approaches could be adopted and needs to be adopted soon, as there are countless Maasai youths who are between two worlds, and out of place in both.

III. Education versus Culture: Is Education Destroying the Culture of the Maasai?

‘Is Education Destroying the Culture of the Maasai?’ was the original question that I sought to answer when I began thinking of topics to research. I had been to Kenya in 2004 and I hypothesized that the formal education system could destroy the culture of the Maasai. I thought that as an individual changed through being formally educated, they would neglect their previous traditions, which would result in the destruction of their community. However, through further research, I began to understand how dynamic the culture of the Maasai is. The community has continually adapted to external pressures and though some aspects obviously have been left behind, they have been able to maintain or strengthen their culture throughout history. Some of the examples in the previous and current chapters, have shown that there are community members and non-community members that believe that parts or all of the culture should be changed, while others believe that most of the cultural elements should be preserved while adapting to these new external pressures. There are still others who believe that the culture will remain completely intact, as they will continue to isolate themselves from these external pressures. There is evidence that education could dramatically change the culture of the Maasai; however, the culture is very strong and if history teaches us anything, the Maasai have been and will continue to adapt their culture. As the Maasai incorporate change into their community they will hopefully create a strong, hybrid society.

Education and the Maasai culture are, however, conflicting in many ways. The Maasai culture is not suited to formal education and the education system does not have any flexibility to deal with this conflict. *Moranism*, which is vital to the age-group system of the Maasai community and is the educational system to teach traditional lessons, cannot currently co-exist with the formal education system. Presently, both *moranism* and

secondary education demand too much from their students and prevent participation in both at the same time. This forces young Maasai men to make the choice at a very young age between attending secondary school and becoming a *morán*. If they choose education, they have decided to live a more modern existence, if they choose *moranism*, they have chosen to live more traditionally. I believe that the formal education system and *moranism* can be integrated as I will discuss in the concluding chapter.

Unity among age-mates has been fostered through *moranism* throughout the history of the Maasai community; however, with the onset of the formal education system, this unity is being threatened. As Jeff explains, “unity is not as strong when you are learned.” Education has created problems of disunity within the Maasai community’s age-set system because of the different types of knowledge and understanding that typically accompany education. “When they [non-educated Maasai] are undergoing the rite of passage they might have other issues that they share and might discuss that are different than those who are educated. Therefore, this creates problems of unity within the group” (May 28 2006). Disunity during *moranism* might have a lasting effect on the governance of the Maasai community. This is because the Maasai govern in an egalitarian way where each man has a right to speak but instead of fostering discussion, it might foster disagreements and division. Again, this issue could manifest itself spatially. The Maasai have councils that control and monitor land use and when droughts present themselves, surrounding sections ask to utilize these pastures from a council of elders in control of the needed saturated area. If there is disunity amongst the age-set, sections may be denied access to wet pastures, causing significant problems for the livestock and livelihood of other sections.

Many educators stated that they believe that Maasai ceremonies, like male circumcision²¹, should take place on holidays so as not to disrupt the semester. This option seems like a good one, as many school-aged children want to participate in these ceremonies and therefore are absent from school during ceremonial times. The Kenyan school system is ongoing throughout the year and is divided into three semesters with about a month of holidays in between. This provides for three months of school and one month of holidays. Educators and community members are calling for leaders of the Maasai community to establish a routine, to set up a schedule that allows ceremonies to take place only during the school holidays, which could reduce the high absentee rates.

Although I had already changed my original question from destroying to changing the Maasai culture before I met Sean, I was able to shift my belief that the Maasai culture could be kept mostly intact even though more Maasai children are attending school. Sean is the cultural leader for his age-set and he is highly respected by all. He is a ceremonial leader, which means that he must participate in all cultural events and be a strong leader in the community. Sean has accomplished all of these things. Community members look up to him and he participates eagerly in all events of his community. Sean is presently attending the University of Nairobi and will become the first university educated leader. He left school to become a *morán*. Many students who have done this find it difficult to reintegrate themselves back into the classroom as they are participating with those who are much younger than they are. Sean said that he is able to manage both lives because he has the responsibility of organizing all ceremonies and is able to organize them around his school schedule. Sean is an excellent role model for all Maasai families. He is well respected within the community because of his status as age-set leader and he has

²¹ Most educators that I spoke with wanted female circumcision to be abolished from the culture.

accomplished a university education, which is an incredible feat. The elders, who select the age-set leader at a young age, should probably now start taking into account the academic intellect when picking the next age-set leader. This will encourage more young adults to participate in both education and cultural experiences and will strengthen the culture even more, as the Maasai will be well educated in both formal schooling and traditional learning.

IV. Conclusion

Education has been slowly changing the Maasai community since colonization; however, this change has been strengthened by the Kenyan government's commitment to the global ideals of universal education for all, as the establishment of Free Primary Education has lowered the expense for parents. This chapter discusses some the changes that are presently taking place in the Maasai community. Those with education often desire a different lifestyle than those without it.

They will live differently. It's hard to share education and culture. It's even harder to tell them [those with education] to keep animals in the bushes, it's very hard when they are educated. Those who are educated want to live a different life (Frank, June 9 2006).

This different life is hard to achieve when the education system in Narok is of such poor quality. As Mike shares, “[a]ll of us [speaking of himself and three others who had received post-secondary education] here, became educated not because of the education system, but in spite of it” (May 28 2006). The global ideal of education for all has increased the Kenyan government's desire to educate their population; their ideal of a modern and productive country has hastened the onset of the formal education system, one that could not be implemented properly as the resources are not available to them. This means that in areas such as Narok, the education system is failing its population.

The Maasai are receiving low standards of education, which nevertheless are exposing them to new ideas and ways of life. This exposure has begun to change the community with many Maasai desiring a new modern way of life; however, because of the limited resources for the education system, they are unable to achieve it and are now living in a state of transition, they are no longer traditionalist and because of a lack of quality education, they cannot be modernist either.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

I. Introduction

The future of the Maasai community is at a crossroads. For some in this community, the options are to head in the direction of modernization, completely abandoning their culture and their history. Others demand that the community stays true to its history and culture, continuing its isolation and abandoning modernization. There is a third option available that combines modernization with traditional culture, allowing individuals in the community to decide what is important to them. These choices will be hard to make but I think that many of the differences between the modern and traditional worlds can be combined to create a community that is culturally strong while also participating in the modern world.

II. Discussion

Discussions and decisions need to be made soon as pressures from the prevalent neoliberal global economy are at present capitalizing on and putting pressure on this community as never before. External pressures from the state and from tourists at lodges have increased the Maasai's interactions with outside communities. These interactions have allowed Maasai to witness the power and wealth held by outside communities, which is increasing the desire of Maasai parents to have their children engage with formal education in order to achieve the desired, but often unobtainable, goal of a modern lifestyle. The cultural change that is presently ensuing is causing many dramatic shifts in communal and individual living and is a direct consequence of neoliberal globalization and its infiltration of the formal education system. In many ways neoliberal globalization is about becoming a 'good western citizen' and as Bourdieu reminds us, the formal

education system in all countries reproduces the dominant culture of that country. This allows us to understand the changes that are occurring in the Maasai community as changing from the old traditions to become part of the dominant culture that reproduces itself. This is why this discussion is vitally important. Change is presently occurring in *Maasailand* and if the community is going to be able to sustain its culture, the community needs to decide what it wants from the modern and traditional worlds.

The cultural change that is presently underway has allowed Maasai students and their families to participate in different lifestyles from their traditions. These new ideas are not all bad, in fact there are many positive changes that are helping members of its community live healthier lifestyles and maybe even more fulfilled lives; however, are the positive changes justified if the community is unable to sustain its culture? This is just one of the questions that needs to be answered by members of the community so that they can begin to create the world that they desire.

The formal education system in Kenya is changing how the Maasai value their cultural, social and economic capital. The neoliberal culture in Kenya dominates the formal education system and is teaching the Maasai that their traditions are not valued and in many ways, that their community is primitive. The changes are affecting all aspects of Maasai life and include physical changes to their bodies and their homesteads, an increased desire for cultivation, leading the Maasai away from their previous lifestyle that was centred around livestock, increased integration with outside communities as their ability to communicate increases, and understanding their marginalized status as Kenyans. These are the findings of this thesis. As previously discussed, there are many paths of development that can be taken for this community and I would like to highlight

different ideas of development that the community suggested as well as educational policy that has not been taken advantage of by the community.

III. Recommendations and Future Research

The purpose of this study was exploratory, to find and bring complicated issues to light from the perspective of the Maasai community. It is on advice from them that the following educational recommendations have been created. Although there are no easy answers, these recommendations may serve as guidelines for future research that may in the end help the Maasai community decide upon their own future. As an outsider I cannot begin to fully understand the implications of this change. It needs to be community members who decides which ideas to implement or not implement and these may be personal as well as communal decisions. Among the ideas that I received from the community are boarding schools, a school for adults who are returning to education, non-formal education (NFE) for *morans* and nomadic families, the opening of tourism colleges and vocational schools in the area and the potential to open up more secondary schools in the future. These are all ideas that will need more research before they can be implemented. There is a need also to find additional funding sources besides the government. At present the Kenyan government cannot support financially the formal education system, which means that they are unlikely to be able to fully facilitate the infrastructure that is necessary for these programs; it will be necessary therefore, to seek the help of non-government organizations (NGOs) and foreign governments to help fund these endeavours. While outside funding may not be the ideal situation, as I believe that public education is an essential service and so, having foreign governments, NGOs and maybe even corporations help fund these endeavours may give more children the opportunity to receive a good quality education. Some people may see this as a further

encroachment of neoliberalism into the formal education system; however, it may also be a necessary evil. There are a number of instances of corporations and other agencies assisting with public education in developed countries, and at present, the Toronto District School Board is considering using such options (Porter, 2007). These private sources of funding should only be used after all other options have been exploited. For instance, are Kenyan citizens taxed enough? The average citizen probably is; however, are individuals who are working in government and private industry? There are great disparities of wealth in this country, are the individuals taxed enough who hold these positions of power? Does the Kenyan government have the agency to tax individuals and corporations more? Since the Kenyan government is being guided by neoliberal reforms, at the demand of the World Bank and IMF, they maybe unable to increase taxes on individuals and corporations as this could be seen as unfair in a neoliberal economy.

Another arena for funding could come from limiting corruption in the government. There are many that would argue that the current political system in Kenya cedes too much power to the President and her/his Ministers. These people could argue that there is enough money to help fund these projects if government officials and other corporations stopped stealing from the citizens of Kenya (Teng'o, 2002). No matter how these funding sources are accumulated, they will begin to allow the Maasai to engage with formal education that is empowering rather than destructive and will allow the community to engage with neoliberal globalization for their own benefit instead of their community's demise. The following ideas are meant as suggestions only but the community may find that by engaging with formal education they are able to reach their goals for modernization while holding on to important traditions from their ancestry.

Throughout my research, I found that almost everyone who was interviewed suggested that boarding schools are necessary for the development of this community and region. As stated in previous chapters, there are many reasons why educators and community members seek to have boarding schools and they include; avoiding long early morning walks for students and potential encounters with dangerous wildlife, the distracting environments in their villages taking students away from their work, having access to teachers' advice when having problems with work, and ensuring a high attendance rate of children. These are all excellent reasons for building more boarding schools. At present, the area has only one boarding school, which is at full capacity and another school is undergoing the process of being turned into a boarding school. This leaves the majority of children to endure the inconvenience of day schools.

Participants stated the need for boarding schools; however, Harry, a non-Maasai head teacher, suggested building a central boarding school for students from standards 4 to 8 and having more day schools for children in pre-primary and standards 1 to 3. Harry suggested that this would help alleviate the teacher shortage in the area. The schools in *Maasailand* are not at capacity but there is still a need for a teacher to be in each class and Harry is suggesting that with a central boarding school for all children, this would reduce the need of teachers, and reduce the financial burden for the government (June 8 2006). This is a realistic plan that would allow for students who are in pre-primary and standard 1 through 3 to remain at home with their parents during the evenings and weekends (Samantha, May 26 2006) and attend schools that are closer to their villages, eliminating the distances and dangerous animals on the way to school. This will also allow younger children to participate in their community's activities before they are forced to leave their homes for periods of up to three months.

Boarding schools have been used in many parts of the world and have failed miserably; one example of this is the Indian Residential schools in Canada from the 1920s until the last school closed in 1996 (CBC, 2007). The goal of the Canadian government was for missionaries to run boarding schools for the aboriginals of Canada in order to hasten the assimilation of aboriginal children. There were many problems with the way these schools were run, which include physical, mental and sexual abuse that were reported by the students.²² These situations obviously need to be avoided in the implementation of any new boarding school, but it is not the focal problem for this paper. The use of these schools to promote assimilation is the main problem that needs to be addressed before the construction of these boarding schools in *Maasailand* begins. I have some suggestions that will make the boarding school(s) more culturally aware, if that is what the community decides they need. The Maasai community needs to decide if they want to continue to strengthen their cultural heritage while at the same time, strengthening their interactions with the modern world. However, if the route of assimilation is decided upon by the community then the following suggestions do not need to be implemented.

If boarding school(s) are to be built in *Maasailand*, they need to recognize the cultural significance of the surrounding community. Educators state that the Maasai culture is promoted in the school setting because the songs and dances of the community are taught, and although this is true and helpful, there are other aspects of cultural awareness that need to be taken into account if boarding schools are to be successful in

²² Examples of physical, mental and sexual abuse still occurs to this day in boarding schools. A present example is Oprah Winfrey's school in South Africa, which has reported a case of sexual abuse by one of the teachers. There does need to be regulations put into place to prevent these cases and the response of Oprah's school needs to be considered and appropriate policies founded before there is more talk of opening boarding schools.

bridging the gap between a traditional lifestyle and modernity. These schools will be more demanding of students and educators as they will be forced to follow both the normal curriculum of Kenya and continue to learn about the culture and community of the Maasai. These boarding schools need to be more culturally aware than other educational institutions as they are taking on part of the parental and community role in teaching respect and cultural awareness. One suggestion is mandatory after school classes²³ on the culture of the Maasai. This can include *Maa* language classes, the history of the Maasai, cultural significance, for example, why *morans* are important, the importance of elders and the role of women. Educated Maasai or ghost writers, might record the history and culture of the Maasai in textbooks and novels, which will then be utilized in these after school classes.

Most boys and girls who finish primary school do not go on to secondary school because they either participate in *moranism* or are married at an early age. These children are not usually given the opportunity to go back to school afterwards. For boys, this is because it is hard for older boys to return to school after they have taken several years off to be *morans*. *Moranism* can take up to five years, and it is frustrating and difficult for boys to go back and attend classes with students who are much younger. This choice often forces boys to decide at an early age between becoming educated and participating fully in their cultural heritage. Mike saw this as a terrible situation and shared his idea of classes for adults returning to school. I believe building a school, or at least having a classroom in day schools or in the centrally located boarding school, for both men and women who for whatever reason left school or who did not originally go to school at all

²³ These after school classes could take place in day schools as well and would help students who are participating in formal education the opportunity to learn more about their culture and traditions.

would provide the opportunity to return to education and to learn in a setting that is more conducive to their needs (May 28 2006).

I have included women who are married at an early age in this group because I feel that it is important to include their opinions. While doing my research, I asked several people why women do not go back to school after they are married, and the response that I was given was because they are married. It seems to me that once a woman is married, she is given little choice in what her future holds. I believe that it is important to have a place for women who choose to go back to school once they have been married in order to give them equal opportunities. I understand that this part of the plan may take many years before it will be accomplished because women are not given as many options as men, and it is probably the husband's choice if the wife goes back to school; however, I think that the option needs to be there.

The main program that I think would benefit the Maasai is non-formal education (NFE). Non-formal education is not widely understood by this community and it is communities such as the Maasai that would benefit most from its implementation. NFE would allow *morans* and children of families that are still participating in nomadicism to receive an education at the same time. For the Maasai community, this includes *morans* who are participating in cultural activities, and children whose parents are living a nomadic life. One possible form of NFE is for *morans* to be able to continue to participate in cultural activities such as living in the bush surrounded by their age-group but which allows them to learn about their heritage, to learn how their community is governed and to become a unified group. These are the main goals for *morans*; however, some sacrifices must be made in order to have both cultural knowledge and formal education. For *morans*, it would be necessary to devote portions of the day to education and since

morans are the age of secondary scholars, there would be particular challenges as the students progress along in their educational careers. However, I believe that it could work. More research is needed to assess the potential before pilot projects could be implemented; however, I think that it could be successful if several²⁴ well-trained Maasai teachers would return to the area to teach in NFE schools for *morans*. *Morans* live in large groups for many months in order to unify their age-group in decision making; this large group would be able to benefit from NFE because the school would come to them, which would allow them to continue to participate in cultural activities, while remaining part of the education system.

After the successful implementation of NFE for *morans*, NFE could help many of the Maasai children whose parents are still living a nomadic lifestyle. During periods of drought, children are routinely taken out of school for weeks to move with their families to find new pastures for their livestock. Depending on the number of children who are moving, the NFE could also help these children. For instance, if a large group of children moved together during periods when livestock are located in new pastures, a teacher could give them lessons and help them keep up with their school work, thus providing migrating education. An official from the Teachers' Commission stated that little was needed to implement NFE in these situations. He said all that was needed was trained teachers who know the lifestyle of the Maasai and teaching material for the curriculum (June 20 2006). All of this could easily be provided and a mobile school could follow the children from pasture to pasture, allowing the children to understand their culture, work for their family's success, while being prepared for a modern life. This would allow the

²⁴ A pilot project is needed to assess how many teachers are necessary to allow this type of school to exist but there is probably a need of 3 or more teachers.

children to have the skills they need to live in both the modern and traditional community. These ideas might allow children to participate in formal education while maintaining their strong cultural heritage.

As previously described, the NFE system has its problems. The government does not fund it as they are struggling to fund the formal education system, which means that this sector receives its funding from private companies and NGOs. Since NFE schools are outside the formal school system, it gives those in charge of these schools free reign to decide on the curriculum. This creates differing knowledge from those who receive their education from other institutions or agencies, which has led many to think of the NFE system as inferior to the formal education system. These are major problems that need to be dealt with and the Kenyan government recognizes its own failings in the matter. However, all of that being said, I believe that if done properly, the NFE system could substantially help the Maasai community. Following the formal curriculum closely would be one solution and having additional classes that teach about the culture of the Maasai community and vocational training like animal husbandry, ecotourism and agriculture, are all things that relate to growing up in *Maasailand*, and would help strengthen the Maasai community.

Strengthening the Maasai community through education and encouraging the continuation of their culture is very important for some in the community; however, it is also necessary to create economic opportunities for the Maasai where they live. Creating economic opportunities and/or development in this area needs to be discussed by the entire community before any development can take place; as creating development may alter the landscape for the entire community. If the choice is made that economic opportunities need to be created, one way to achieve this is through the creation of

vocational schools and colleges throughout the area. Although the government does not have the resources to open schools in many areas I would recommend the establishment of a vocational school or college in *Maasailand* to enable Maasai students to live in their area and participate in school. The purpose of this school would be for post-secondary education that allows students to focus on tourism (Darcy, June 1 2006). This would be a significant opportunity for the region as the Maasai Mara National Reserve attracts the majority of tourists to the country and would provide students with hands-on instruction in one of the most diverse ecosystems in the world. This would also provide the world with a service as it would allow the Maasai to gain economic strength from the resources in their region and would prevent development of other industries. As the Maasai begin to benefit from the tourist potential from their area community members would probably refrain from engaging in destructive activities such as large-scale agriculture.

With the onset of education, many Maasai are beginning to branch out into other activities, some moving away from the community while others are beginning to participate in large-scale agriculture and fencing of their property. These activities could destroy the balance in the ecosystem and the region's natural habitat. It is the responsibility of the Kenyan government, international organizations and other governments to help members of the Maasai community find ways to earn a stable and reasonable income to support themselves and their families. I believe that one of the solutions to this problem is for the Kenyan government, foreign governments and tourism corporations to build a college in *Maasailand* with a focus on tourism in general and specifically ecotourism for the Maasai Mara National Reserve. Although this is buying into the global ecotourism economy, this is also allowing the Maasai to attend college in their home region and would allow the kind of training that is necessary in the reserve,

lodges and other parts of the industry. This would give the Maasai community a stable income and redirect the flow of money back into the community instead of out of it, thus allow them to earn a decent living without destroying the ecosystem that surrounds them.

Before the implementation of any of the above ideas, more research is needed; however, there also needs to be more research done in several areas not only to extend data collected but also to compensate for possible limitations and bias evident in this study. While performing my research I asked my guide and interpreter to introduce me to Maasai community members who are young adults who had not received any formal education. I asked specifically for this as both my guide and translator seemed to introduce me only to those who had some level of education. I am unsure if they did not understand me, or if those who lacked formal education did not want to participate, or there were few young adults in Narok who had not received some level of education. However, I did not interview any young adults who had not received formal education at least until standard 4. Gaining the perspective of non-educated young Maasai adults should be sought if further research is to be done, as they may have a different perspective on the future of the community. They could either give the perspective of a traditionalist or one who desires modernization but is unable to achieve it because they were held back by their parents. These perspectives would be interesting and necessary for further research.

The other issues that arose while in Kenya relate to those of any foreigner who attempts to do research in another country, especially with those who speak another language. Kenya has two national languages, Kiswahili and English. However, there are many different ancestral languages that are also used and for the Maasai, it is *Maa*. I do not speak *Maa* or Kiswahili and therefore, I was forced to use an interpreter. Although

Gabe was a good interpreter, he may have misinterpreted some information that I would have been able to pick up on if I had spoken *Maa* fluently.

As already mentioned, Daniel, my guide was an indispensable asset as he is a trusted member of the community. I believe that his presence gave this study an aura of authenticity and meant that those who were interviewed were more honest with their answers than if I had attempted this on my own. That being said, I believe that I could have received even more accurate answers if I had been a member of the community myself or had been present in the area for a longer period. This would have allowed me to gain the trust of those who I interviewed, which may have encouraged the participants to be even more candid with me. But because of time and monetary constraints, I was unable to accomplish this. However, I believe that I received fairly accurate information from those who were interviewed.

IV. Conclusion

Global influences are demanding the protection of endangered animals and environments, and the Maasai Mara National Reserve is one of these ecosystems. The Kenyan government cannot be the only financial supporter, as they are quite poor in comparison to other governments and since protecting unique environments benefits the world, foreign governments along with NGOs and other supranational organizations should help fund projects that will sustain these areas. Protecting unique environments is not the focal point of this paper; however, I have included it here as it helps attract financial support for a community. The Maasai Mara National Reserve is a famous game park that attracts millions of tourists from all over the world. In order to gain financial support from foreign governments, NGOs and tourist corporations, in order to help the Maasai community gain independence and educational benefits, I believe it is necessary

to promote the Maasai's cause through demonstrating the environmental affects that further development could have if not completed properly.

Colonialism was a main instigator of the emerging problems that are presently affecting the Maasai community as it forced the Maasai from their traditional grazing lands and allowed for an easier transplantation of neoliberal globalization to take form in Kenya and the Maasai community. During the period of British rule and following independence in 1963, the Maasai remained an isolated community. However, as the tourism industry continues to grow throughout their region, the Maasai values are being influenced by western ideals of wealth and power through exposure to tourists at lodges. The exposure of western ideas from tourists along side supranational organizations declaring education to be a human right has increased the desire of many within this community to participate in formal education. The United Nations has encouraged all countries to create free primary education for its citizens, and Kenya complied in 2003. The lower costs have allowed more students in *Maasailand* to participate in formal education. However, the World Bank and IMF have forced the Kenyan government to spend less on formal education, which has created a system whose poor quality does not empower students enough to achieve their goals and desires. This means that Maasai students are given the opportunity to learn about different lifestyles, but they are not given the tools needed to provide this type of life for themselves. The schools in *Maasailand* are of such low quality that most students are unable to compete successfully in national exams and therefore are unable to get into post-primary or post-secondary education. This means that it is highly unlikely that they will be able to get well-paying jobs. This is a significant problem for the community as some who have participated in

formal education have the desire to change their lives to a modern style of living but have not been given the tools to achieve it, thus creating a generation in transition.

One of the main problems for this region is that two counter-productive development ideas are occurring. The first is tourism. This industry brings in millions of dollars of revenue for the country each year and requires that tourists receive an ‘authentic’ experience when visiting these ‘primitive’ areas. Consequently, the tourist industry sells the image of Maasai identity and demands that the Maasai portray themselves as the tourists would expect, as a ‘backward’ and ‘primitive’ group. This industry is demanding that the Maasai continue to live and interact with their capital in traditional ways. The contradiction is that many in this community no longer want to live as the tourist industry demands and instead would prefer to develop their community and their capital, change parts of their culture and begin to live in a more modern environment. Some Maasai community members are trying to become ‘good western citizens,’ they are attempting to modernize and to engage with neoliberal globalization through increasing their cultural, social and economic capital, by gaining employment (and/or economic capital by participating in activities that lead to ‘fast money’) and living in more modern ways.

One way that I believe that this region can flourish is to combine the contradictions to produce one goal for development. Since the tourist industry is a major income earner, it seems highly unlikely that the Kenyan government would allow harm to come to it, so instead, it should be developed further but access to jobs should be controlled²⁵ to provide

²⁵ Realistically, this could take more than a decade to accomplish as more Maasai students need to attend post-secondary education in order to be at the standards that the industry demands. I believe that more Maasai should be utilized as guides, as their knowledge of the local area is outstanding, and that more opportunities within this industry need to be made available and held for Maasai community members. I

the Maasai with meaningful employment thereby redirecting the cash flow into their community, instead of out of it. This will allow the community to interact and work with neoliberalism but to make it work for their own development instead of working towards the continued development of other communities.

My hope is that as the members of the community become more educated and exposed to new ideas they will decide what is important in the modern and traditional world and will begin to implement this new hybrid society.

Maasai is a very positive community, people do not get discouraged, they know that they have to go through so many valleys and mountains before you reach your destination. So that's where we want to go, and we've started now moving with the world, we want to move our destination (Jeff, May 28 2006).

believe this is necessary, as without the help of the community, the industry could drastically decline if the Maasai community decided to develop other industries instead.

Appendix 1: Questions for Maasai Community Members

1. How is your life different from your parents/grandparents?
2. What makes a person Maasai?
3. Did you attend school?
 - a) If yes, was it your choice to go to school?
 - b) What is the highest level of education that you achieved?
 - c) If not, why?
4. Would you have wanted to have access to more education?
5. How has the access to education or lack of education affected your life?
6. Do you have any children or do you want children?
7. What are your goals for your children/future children?
 - a) Do you want them to live in this area?
8. Are children who attend school losing out on gaining traditional knowledge?
9. Do you believe that children who attend school are losing parts of Maasai culture?
10. Do you grow crops?
 - a) If yes, where did you learn to do this?

Appendix 2: Questions for Educators

1. Do Maasai children attend school because of government force or parental encouragement?
2. In your opinion what are the biggest problems facing the formal education system in Kenya with regards to the Maasai?
3. What are the biggest changes that are taking place in the Maasai community because of access to education?
4. What changes do you think need to be done to the formal education system to better the Maasai community?
5. Are there any other issues that you would like to discuss involving the Maasai and the formal education system in Kenya?
6. Does the curriculum provide children with practical knowledge? If so, what do they learn?

Rotating Questions

5. Do you think there is away for children to attend formal education and remain part of a traditional Maasai culture? If so, how?
6. Do you believe that education is useful for the development of the Maasai community?
7. What role, if any, could formal education play in preserving the Maasai culture?
 - a) Are there presently any measures in place to do this?
8. Is there still a gender bias in sending children to school for the Maasai?
 - a) If yes, are there measures in place or being implemented to address this?

Additional Questions Asked to the official from the Teacher's Commission of Kenya and the Maasai professor

9. Is it mandatory for children to attend school?
 - a) If yes, until what age or standard?
 - b) Does the government enforce this? How?
 - c) Do Maasai families willingly send their children to school?
 - d) If not, are they receptive to government force?
10. What does Free Primary Education mean?
 - a) How has the Maasai community responded to FPE?
 - b) Are more Maasai families willing to send their children to school?

11. What is the non-Formal education system?
 - a) How does it relate to the Maasai community?
 - b) Is it helping?
 - c) Do many families utilize it?

12. Is there still a discrepancy between education in the urban vs. rural settings?
 - a) Since the Maasai typically live in the rural areas, what is being done to address this issue?

13. For the Maasai who participate in the formal education system, after graduation from primary school, do many of them go onto secondary school? To university/college?

Questions asked to Secondary School Educators

1. Why aren't more Maasai students attending secondary school?

2. What are the benefits for those Maasai who attend secondary school?

3. In your opinion, what are the biggest problems facing the formal education system in Kenya for the Maasai community? (Secondary education and in general)

4. What are the biggest changes that are taking place in the Maasai community because of the access to secondary education?

5. What changes do you think need to be done to the formal education system to better the Maasai community?

6. Does the curriculum provide children with practical knowledge?

7. Is there anything else that you would like to discuss regarding the Maasai community and the formal education system?

Appendix 3: Questions for Key Informants

1. In your opinion what are the biggest problems facing the Maasai today?
2. How is education affecting the Maasai community?
3. How do you think the Maasai community perceives the effects of education?
4. Are governments forcing children to attend school? What is your role in this (asked to the government paid local chief)?
 - a) How does the government (or you) enforce this?
 - b) How do families respond to this?
5. Are the boys that attend school still able to participate in traditional ceremonies like becoming a *moran*?
6. Do you think that there is away for children to attend formal education and remain part of a traditional Maasai culture? If so, how?
7. Is there anything else that you would like to discuss regarding the Maasai and formal education?

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