Maasai Migrations: Implications for HIV/AIDS and Social Change in Tanzania

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ABSTRACT & KEY WORDS:

In about 1997, rural Maasai pastoralists in Tanzania began migrating to cities for wage labor in previously unseen numbers due to intensifying poverty, droughts, and livestock herds depleted by disease. Ethnographic narratives gathered between 1999 and 2001 during field research on rural-urban migration in Tanzania indicated an apparent diminishment of ‘traditional’ Maasai elder authority, and a lack of accurate knowledge about the mechanisms of HIV-AIDS. Although there are few ‘pure’ pastoralists, most having adopted agriculture to some degree, Tanzanian Maasai have remained isolated and traditional to a greater extent than Kenyan Maasai. Without livestock, impoverished elders have little to do and are ill-equipped to advise their would-be migrant brothers, wives and sons about urban matters. Unrelenting perceptions of Maasai ‘conservatism’ and ‘backwardness’ appear to perpetuate negative reactions to the migrants by urban officials and administrators. Such images merely foster official exhortations that semi-nomadic Maasai return to their drought-stricken homelands and ‘settle’ into cattle farming. There are few educational programs, services or support for them. I suggest that when lack of information about HIV-AIDS and diminished elder authority are combined with the customary practice of polygyny, Maasai labor migrants are particularly at risk for contracting HIV in cities, and rapidly spreading it through their rural homelands.

KEY WORDS: Elder authority, HIV-AIDS, Maasai, Tanzania, urban labor migration.

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Introduction: Places in the Field/Cities, Iloipi, and Bomas

The quite recent movements of growing numbers of Maasai pastoralists from hinterlands to cities, although having a longer history in Kenya, have not to my knowledge been documented for Tanzania. While wage labor migration is not a new form by any means, in the Tanzanian context it is a form recently inhabited by new groups – including pastoralists who are increasingly seeking urban jobs as security guards and night watchmen (walinzi; pl. Swahili). And, as Portes et al. (1989:13) have noted, “An old form in a new setting is, in fact, new since all social relationships can only be defined in their specific historical context.”

Recently, researchers have argued that human mobility “is a key neglected factor in explaining the spread of HIV/AIDS over the last decade” in the African countries with the highest prevalence rates. Moreover, few intervention programs target this group. And because there has been little research, we lack understanding of this relationship; that is, how and to what extent migration affects the spread of the disease (Williams et al. 2002).

However, it has been hypothesized in Cohen and Trussell (1996), for example, that migration can affect AIDS transmission in Sub-Saharan Africa through the instrumentality of movement from areas of low endemicity [such as Tanzania’s Maasailand localities] to larger, more congregated populations (Quinn, 1994; cited in Cohen et al. 1996: 64-68). Moreover, the study finds that economic recession may aggravate transmission of HIV through increased migration, which disrupts rural families and increases risk for that population. Poverty and the widening rural/urban gap in income and social services have generated large movements to cities in Africa (ibid: 128), the common form being seasonal or temporary, often classified as ‘circular’ migration, with intention to return to the area of origin (cf. Gugler 1970; Hansen 1990; Hyden 1980; Little 1974; Mayer 1974; Schapera 1947; Stichter 1985). Such a pattern heightens potential to spread HIV/AIDS at both ends, especially among returning migrants who flaunt their wealth and acquire more partners (ibid: 129).
These conditions – exacerbating poverty, increased temporary migration out to cities and back, and disruptions of customary rural social supports – are all relevant in the present case, and include the no doubt unforeseen (and certainly unintended) consequence of the threat of spreading sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), especially HIV-AIDS. The incidence of HIV infection among those aged 15 to 49 in Tanzania is about 8 percent, but Maasai have remained relatively unaffected. From my interviews with Maasai migrants and others, moreover, it was clear that there was among them an alarming lack of accurate information about how the disease is contracted or prevented. Arguably, with increasing rural to urban movements this potential threat is amplified for the Maasai community, given their cultural history of polygyny and the widespread customary practice by both men and women of having extra-marital lovers.

As a minority group in Tanzania, social services and government assistance initiatives often by-pass Maasai due not only to their relative isolation in semi-arid inland areas, but also because of outmoded and negative images and perceptions about them that refuse to die. Further, my research indicates that with increasing poverty and migration, traditional authority inhering in Maasai elders appears to be lessening among those interviewed. These factors combine to exacerbate the migration rate and also, due to a lack of appropriate assistance programs, could predict a rapid proliferation of STD transmission through the Maasai community. As one informant, an educated young Maasai professional, put it: “We are waiting for an explosion in Maasailand.” Life-threatening for the migrants, it is also potentially

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1 This prevalence rate is according to the United Nations Development Program, July 19, 2001, UN Integrated Regional Information Network. The range of rates that can be ascertained for Tanzania reflect the difficulties in access to accurate data. UNAIDS gives the Tanzania prevalence rate as 7.8 percent (UNAIDS Epidemiological Fact Sheet on HIV/AIDS and Sexually Transmitted Infections for Tanzania, 2002 update); while the official website for the United Republic of Tanzania Ministry of Health, gives the rate as 8.7 percent, with a range of 5 to 20 percent across population sectors (blood donors, ante-natal clinic users, sex workers, truck drivers, e.g.) and geographic space. However, in the paper by Williams et al. (2002) of the Southern African Migration Policy Series (No. 24) the rate in Tanzania is given as 13.7 percent, seventh lowest of the 20 African countries studied, with rates ranging from a high of 43 percent in Botswana to a low of 7.7 percent in Burkina Faso (cf. http://www.census.gov/ipc/www/hivaidsw.html).
devastating for Tanzania’s strained and inadequate health care system and its afflicted rural economy.

Field research for this study was conducted in both rural and urban settings in Tanzania during a 15-month period in 1999-2000, and continued October to December, 2001. Questions were designed to ascertain information, inter alia, about causes, impacts and conditions of Maasai rural-urban migration and the level of knowledge about HIV/AIDS. Inquiries about AIDS also touched on knowledge and use of condoms, and levels of interaction between male Maasai migrants and city women. In addition, impacts of migration on elder authority and elder-junior relations – fundamental precepts of Maasai social structure – were explored. In 1999-2000, 44 individual interviews were conducted, yielding quantitative sociodemographic data, and a further 52 Maasai people, including non-migrants, contributed narratives during individual and group discussions. The following year, 89 Maasai were interviewed either individually or in groups. Most informants were from the large Kisongo section of Maasai, but a few Parakuyo were also interviewed (see Table 1).

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One of the first migrant Maasai men interviewed in Dar es Salaam related how warriors and elders have the propensity to visit each other daily at home in Maasailand. They typically go from one *enkang* to another to find an appropriate place – under a particular tree, or in someone’s enclosure – to socialize with their age mates, exchange news, discuss problems and play games. This tendency has led to a similar practice among migrants in Dar es Salaam; a

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2 In 2001-02, I participated with Dr. J.T. McCabe in a pilot study on Maasai migration, elder authority and HIV-AIDS funded by the National Institutes of Health through the Institute of Behavioral Science Population Aging Center at the University of Colorado at Boulder. The proposal for that pilot was based in part on my dissertation research the previous year.

3 *Enkang* is a Maasai homestead within a thorn bush enclosure encompassing the houses of a man and his wives, children, and other dependents, and their animals at night. The Kiswahili word is *boma*, which also seems to be used frequently by Maasai people in the city.
quest to find gathering places – *iloipi* (Maa, pl.)\(^4\) – at which to meet and socialize. It was especially important, the elder continued, to congregate with their Maasai brothers as often as possible in this “hostile” city environment of Dar es Salaam, the functional capital of Tanzania and home to three million people.

Groups of Maasai in their traditional beads and red toga-like clothing were often plainly visible from the road in Dar es Salaam. There were undoubtedly many more *iloipi* in the neighborhoods of the vast city, but I became acquainted with three, located at Mwananyamala, Kijitonyama, and Mwenge. Each *oloip* appeared to have a core membership of at least 30 to 40 people, so these three represented over 100 migrants.\(^5\) Any and all Maasai migrants, most of whom worked as night watchmen, were welcomed to rest and socialize during the day. Over a period of a year we visited these locations frequently, holding numerous individual interviews and group discussions.

I also interviewed migrants in Arusha, the highlands city about 400 miles to the northwest of Dar es Salaam, where in 1999 I noticed considerably more Maasai people than I had seen during any of my previous stays there since 1992. As a mecca for foreign tourism, especially wildlife viewing in Serengeti, Kilimanjaro, Ngorongoro and other surrounding Tanzanian and Kenyan game parks and reserves, Arusha is brimming with tourists, a hefty complement of researchers, and others of the wealthy professional, diplomatic, and expatriate communities. It is this prosperous crowd that provides employment as security guards for men from surrounding Maasailand areas.\(^6\)

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\(^5\) Based on rough counts and inquiries about membership during repeated visits to each of the three *iloipi*.

\(^6\) In 1994, I researched ad hoc involvement in tourism by Maasai in several communities near the Ngorongoro Conservation Area (May 1996b).
During interviews of rural villagers, research was focused on ascertaining, in particular, male and female elders’ perceptions of rural-urban migration, current socioeconomic conditions in their homelands, opinions about what impacts migration might have on Maasai life ways, and exploring their knowledge of the mechanisms of HIV-AIDS. In May 2000, my research assistant and I met with eight Maasai men who hailed from the central Kiteto Steppe/Moipo7 villages of Muungano and Mkanyeni. Half of them were elders, and half were ilmurran (warriors), three of whom were migrants. We interviewed them over a weekend in Same (SAH-may), a regional center located between Dar es Salaam and Arusha at the base of the Pare Mountains.

In October and November 2001, we interviewed again in urban Dar es Salaam, Arusha, and also Zanzibar, the Tanzanian island off the Indian Ocean coast, to where Maasai are also migrating for employment as walinsi (guards) or to sell crafts to tourists. In southern Maasailand we interviewed in rural villages and enkangs in remote areas of Moipo, including Mkanyeni, origin places of many urban migrants. Mkanyeni village is reached via a long dusty track from the main road at Same, through dry and barren-looking bush country. We conducted group discussions in a large park-like acacia grove adjacent to the enkang of the most senior elder of the village. Approximately 25 men had gathered; elders seated on small wood stools and ilmurran lounging on the ground and against tree trunks. Over several hours we interviewed the men first, followed by a group of 25 extremely patient village women. Some days later we also held a discussion with a group of about 20 men and four women, at a Parakuyo enkang in Kwamadale locality some 13 kilometers from Handeni town.

(Table 1 here)

History, Prejudice and Perceptions

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7 The name “Moipo” does not appear on any map, but is used by the Maasai community to refer to part of the large inland Maasai Steppe area of Tanzania, also known as “Kiteto.”
Tanzanian Maasai have remained heretofore comparatively more isolated and ‘traditional’ than some of their pastoralist cousins, possibly due to the absence of long distance trade networks that characterize nomadic pastoralists of the Sahara, for example (Spencer 1997). Nevertheless, Maasai have a long history of interaction and intermarriage with various non-pastoralist groups encountered during their great migrations in search of suitable rangeland for their herds. Based on linguistic markers, Galaty (1993:64) places the arrival of the first Eastern Nilotic Maa-speakers from southern Sudan in the East African Rift Valley about AD 1600 (cf. Spear 1993a: 1). Nilotes mixed with Southern Cushitic pastoralists from Ethiopia, Bantu-speaking farmers from the west and south, and earlier hunter-gatherer populations who traded forest products for livestock (ibid: 9-10).

In hard times, Okiek hunter/gathers and Arusha agriculturalists have often adopted Kisongo Maasai who had lost their cattle, blurring boundaries among these “economically differentiated but interdependent, and ethnically separate but culturally integrated societies” (Spear 1993a: 4). In the 1880s and early 1890s pastoralists suffered through the traumatic period of catastrophes and epizootics that Maasai refer to as ‘emutai’ (translated by Waller as “wipe out” or, from a-mut, “to finish off completely” [1988:74]). Rampant rinderpest and bovine pleuropneumonia infections cut a swathe through their herds, and cholera, smallpox, regional warfare, and famines devastated human populations (ibid: 77). Maasai subsequently regrouped and began to resettle as pastoralists (ibid: 85).

Despite this ethnic intermingling, though, much of the pastoralist literature since Melville Herskovits’ influential work, which defined an “East African Cattle Complex”

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8 Maasai informants during my fieldwork said that the term derived from muta, which they translated as ‘crisis.’

9 According to Richard Waller (1999:26), the massive scale of conjunctural destitution among pastoralist communities resulting from these disasters in the late 19th century “had no parallel until the crises of the past two decades brought poverty once more into the headlines.”
(1926), has emphasized a static ‘persistence’ and rigid cultural boundedness (Rigby 1985; Sandford 1983; Swift 1996:158; Brockington 1999). Together with a similarly enduring ‘tragedy of the commons’ thesis (Hardin 1967) and its accompanying myth that livestock herding intrinsically promotes selfish disregard for common areas and degrades the environment, these stereotypes are bases for much of the prejudice and many of the settlement-oriented intervention schemes directed toward pastoral communities, even today (cf. Rigby 1985; Hodgson 1995; Knowles and Collett 1989).

**Migrants, Strangers, Others**

The Maasai tendency to maintain customary apparel, ornamentation and life ways makes them highly visible in the urban realm. This fact, combined with old images and unremitting notions of backwardness and conservatism often makes Maasai objects of castigation and ridicule in East Africa. In almost every respect, Maasai migrants embody the antithesis of the ‘dominant’ or ‘mainstream’ culture of the city; rather, they are minorities and represent most of the excluded groups: “the poor, the young, the deviants, the immigrants” (Hannerz 1980). Anthropologist Sharon Stephens has noted that migrants in general are excoriated, considered to be ‘country bumpkins,’ people ‘out of place’ (Stephens, 1995:12,16; cf. Douglas, 1966). Even within the home country, according to Tanzanian sociologist C.K. Omari, rural migrants in cities are deemed ‘aliens,’ deviants, and outsiders (Omari & Shaidi 1991:7). Forty years ago, British colonial functionary J.A.K. Leslie (1963) produced an influential ‘survey’ of Dar es Salaam aimed at helping city planners in which he blames migrants for the disorder he perceived in the city (Lewinson 1999). In Anne Lewinson’s interpretation, Leslie viewed Africans “as not properly prepared for urban life, ultimately not belonging there,” that country people in the city “lapsed into ‘immorality’” (Leslie 1963:210, in Lewinson 1999:59, 62,64). Maasai migrants may be said to be ‘doubly damned’: as conservative minorities who refuse to become ‘modern,’ and as ‘out of place’ strangers in the city.
A pertinent example of the way such perceptions mislead is found in the work of Ernestina Coast (2000), an anthropologist from the University of London. She has noted that the ‘relative infertility’ of Maasai women has for decades been widely believed to be the result of a very high incidence of STDs in that population. Seventy-five years ago, colonial medical officers (with decidedly questionable sampling techniques and armed with vivid stereotypes about nomads, according to Coast) predicted that Maasai were in “danger of ultimate extinction” due to these diseases. Over the years, these assumptions have been perpetuated with very little actual data to support them (Coast 2000:150). This type of discourse still exists in Tanzania: it is stated as ‘a widely-known fact’ that the Maasai population suffers inordinately from STDs.\footnote{This is in addition to similar discursive ‘facts’ that Maasai are backward, and that they have too many animals, causing environmental degradation. These days, the latter claim is becoming true, however. As pastoralists’ customary grazing land is usurped for national parks and agricultural interests, they are forced to move into ever more unsuitable (unsustainable) and crowded quarters (Bonner 1993; Neumann 1995; Brockington 1999). Newspapers in the past year have reported several ‘clashes’ between pastoralists and farmers in Morogoro and Babati in central Tanzania, resulting in loss of life. The cause, according to Dr. E. de Pauw of the Food and Agricultural Organisation was lack of “proper demarcation between agricultural land and pastoral land.” Following the report, the President’s office announced the adoption of “a policy to demarcate pastoralist areas,” which de Pauw stated would be very difficult due to the nature of their opportunistic grazing patterns. Any serious attempts at ‘demarcation’ would fundamentally mean ‘sedentarization’ of Maasai as cattle farmers (AP report at IRIN web site, 14 Dec 2000; \textit{The Guardian}, Jan 2002).}

However, in a thorough examination of the literature Coast finds that, while there are certainly STDs among Maasai populations, there is little evidence that this is what causes their lower basic fertility rates.\footnote{Maasai people have told me that the custom of avoiding sexual intercourse (which is thought to harm the fetus) from about the third month of pregnancy to weaning in about the child’s third year accounts for the lower birth rate.} These views are also, Coast suggests, quite “possibly based on the European fascination with the Maasai norm of sexual access by a husband’s age mates to his wives” since such references appear frequently in colonial records. Given these views, Coast concludes, “it is unsurprising that images of Maasai pastoralists as disease-ridden and infertile have persisted for so long” (ibid: 189).
Noted scholar, Aud Talle, a long-time Maasai researcher, also has written about the ‘othering’ of Maasai in the Tanzania/Kenya border town of Namanga (1995; 1999), observing that they are generally perceived as dirty, smelly, poor, and ignorant by non-Maasai populations. Needy Maasai women have become prostitutes in towns, both contemporarily (Talle 1999), and historically (White 1990). The relatively ‘high visibility’ of Maasai women prostitutes in border towns, and the lingering remains of colonialist labeling of nomads as ‘wandering, dirty, promiscuous,’ keep these ideas alive (Coast 2000).\textsuperscript{12} Data in the present case demonstrate that some Tanzanian Maasai women are now migrating to Dar es Salaam, Arusha, and other cities, even as far as Zanzibar, Kampala, and Nairobi, to sell beads and traditional medicines for cash to support their families. Those I interviewed, however, were adamant that they only went to earn money to support their families, and did not mingle with town people. One warrior at Mwenge \textit{oloip} told us:

\begin{quote}
Yes, there are women coming [to cities]. They see that their husbands cannot do anything to feed them so they migrate and find ways to earn. We give them company and chat with them. When they go back, they can add something to the herd. They are the most respected women, and they have permission of their husbands, so their husbands respect them.
\end{quote}

I asked him whether the women felt they were in any danger in the city and he replied, “It is true, they are very worried and fear for their lives. That’s why they group together when it approaches six [and gets dark] in the evening. They return [to their room] from fear.” One of the migrant women who sold beads at Mwenge \textit{oloip} told me that although they migrated alone, they immediately sought out other Maasai women with whom to share a room for protection. They claimed they did not interact with city men; “we tend to remain who we are.”

\textsuperscript{12} In addition to Talle’s work, James Ferguson (1999) presents an excellent discussion of the issue of Africans and ‘modernity;’ also cf. Charles Piot 1999 for critiques of ‘modernity’ and the ‘othering’ of Africans.
Rural-Urban Migrants: Patterns and Places

The ‘average’ Maasai migrant interviewed was a 32.6-year-old male warrior, with no formal education, from the Il Kimunyak/Il Kidotu age-set. He had migrated to the city from Moipo/Kiteto in central Tanzania, was a member of the Kisongo, the largest Maasai section, married to 1.2 wives, with 2.14 children. He was the child of his father’s first wife, and owned about six and a half times fewer animals than his father had. He typically began to seek out work in cities as a mlinzi (guard; Swahili sgl.) around 1997, and traveled home every few months taking money, food, and/or animals from his earnings. Before leaving the city for a temporary period, a Maasai man typically offered a relative or age mate the opportunity to take over his position as mlinzi; but they exchanged places again when he later returned to the city, in a non-seasonal pattern of oscillation and exchange to and from town.

This unique pattern of migration, although it echoes the to and fro of the transhumant Maasai herding pattern, is a divergence from historical pastoralist migrations. Complex and variable, it also differs considerably, for example, from that of non-Maasai rural youth in Tanzania, many of whom are apparently migrating to the city and staying indefinitely. Although most Maasai migrants interviewed were warriors, about 20 percent were elders. Home places of the 44 migrants (42 males, 2 females) from whom quantitative data were collected virtually dot the length and breadth of the geographic area comprising Maasailand in Tanzania; Tanga, Muheza, Moipo, and Korogwe in the east; Handeni, Kijungu, and Kipaya in southern Kiteto; Makami, Engusemet, Simanjiro in the west and northwest; Monduli, Makuyuni, Ngorongoro, Piaya, and Loosiming’orri in the north. Dozens of villages and locality names were given, in several districts and three national regions. A warrior recounted that great numbers of Maasai were in Dar es Salaam from all over:

13 My 2002 dissertation (Unexpected Migrations: Urban labor migration of rural youth and Maasai pastoralists in Tanzania) included a second case study of rural youth who migrate to towns in Tanzania and take up work as mobile street vendors (wamachinga); also cf. May 1996a.
[How many are here?] Ai-ai-ai! There are so many! They are really unnumerable. [If you are asked to just guess the number?] It’s just a whole community in Dar es Salaam! I say it because if you go to this side of Dar es Salaam, you’ll be told these are from Kiteto, and to this side, from Moipo, and over there, from Mwanga, or these are from Saunyi [Handeni]. Even from Endumet and Lerangwa in West Kilimanjaro, or Oloitokitok in Kenya. Oh, I just cannot say because there are so many!!

[MAP? Interview places, migrant origin places]

The largest number (43 percent) were from Kiteto localities (which could reflect opportunistic and/or snowball sampling, or the fact that Kiteto is one of the areas of greatest poverty for Maasai), while about 13 percent each were from Handeni and Ngorongoro areas. Simanjiro and Monduli also tied with almost 7 percent each. The remainder were from other scattered localities or were Il Parakuyo, who tend to live nearer to Dar es Salaam. Seventy-seven percent had no formal schooling. Those who had some primary education were between 16 and 39 years old, but none of the elders (over 40 years of age) had been to school.

Larger patterns, however, are complicated by the differences among the participants in this study. As Jessor (1996:12) observes, the neatly quantified whole of any group studied may not stand up to close examination and “inferences drawn from aggregate [quantified] data may not apply to all – or even any – of the individuals making up the aggregate.” Data at the individual level can bring to light the importance of variability, the complexity of larger patterns and the ideas that explain them (Bernard 1994:360; Kondo 1990; McCabe 1994:79).

Thus a statistical profile of an ‘average’ migrant pastoralist may disguise the variability we found: the very young, the elders, the educated, the ‘wastrels,’ the very few who were relatively well-off, as well as girls and women who were also migrating from their rural homes. Although some were accompanying their husbands or young warrior sons, as mentioned, we

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14 In the mid-1800s intersectional wars, Kisongo eventually defeated the Parakuyo, after which groups of Parakuyo were either absorbed by Kisongo or sought refuge among Bantu farmers in adjacent districts to the south (Rigby 1985:85). Many formed symbiotic alliances with agriculturalists, where they live today as minorities and peripheral pastoralists in scattered groups along the littoral above Dar es Salaam, and in central and southern Tanzania (Galaty 1993:70,74-75; Spear 1993b: 122).
interviewed a handful of women who had moved alone to cities to sell handmade bead jewelry and traditional medicines. Participants therefore transcended categories of origin place, age, wealth status, gender, education, and to a limited extent, Maasai sections. We also met and interviewed several Maasai men in Zanzibar who were making beaded jewelry for sale to tourists there. This was unusual because, in Maasai society, beading is a woman’s task.

What I also found striking was Maasai men still unmarried in their thirties and older; of 23 men between 30-49 years, 26 percent were not yet married. Of the 42 men, almost 43 percent were unmarried. On the other hand, the two youngest – 16 and 17 years old – were both married. Although marriage for males this young is uncommon, this anomaly was explained as a tactic by their parents to insure that they would not get ‘lost’ but would ‘remember’ home and return to their families after a period of labor migration in the city.

Coast’s *Maasai Demography* (2000:91) provides marriage data for a large sample of Tanzanian and Kenyan Maasai. For example, the mean number of wives per currently married man by age group between 26 and 40 years is 1.33 wives; between 41 and 55 years, 1.51 wives; and between 56 and 70 years, 2.08 wives. The 42 male migrants I interviewed averaged comparatively fewer; 0.74 wives each for all males, and still low at 1.2 wives for all married males. It is likely that the extreme poverty of this group is delaying first and even second marriages longer than usual for lack of ability to pay the customary bride price. A 36-year-old unmarried warrior at Mwenge oloip openly expressed his shame at still being single at such an advanced age. He proclaimed that the only reason he endured the trials of the city was to earn enough to purchase livestock, to return home and marry; “or else why suffer in this bush full of mosquitoes?” he asked rhetorically.

The phenomenon of rural-urban migration by Maasai in Tanzania is indicative of an overall intensifying impoverishment in East African pastoralist communities. Almost universally, those interviewed articulated their principal motivations to migrate as poverty
(osina) and hunger (esumash), because diseases and on-going drought had seriously diminished the herds upon which they depend. This is despite the fact that most Maasai families now cultivate a few acres of maize and beans in their home localities, made problematic in many cases, however, by failing rains and lack of access to suitable agricultural land. Although none mentioned it, flourishing cattle diseases may be a result of increasing movements into marginal grazing land. They maintained that only a very few Maasai had migrated for frivolous reasons (although none of our informants claimed this for themselves), and that those few (ilkirikoi, Maa pl.; poor ‘wastrels’ or deviants) were likely to stay in town and become ‘lost’ to the Maasai community. Many informants and on-lookers also blame much of this recent decline in Maasai economic circumstances on their lack of formal education. Formal education has been historically shunned by Maasai people partly due to their mobile life style, and also because the relevance of it for pastoralism was not evident. Deeper fundamental and/or contributing political factors for migration were barely alluded to by respondents, apart from mentions of restricted or non-existent access to adequate land for grazing and farming. The migrants almost unanimously professed little knowledge of the government’s doings, a profound dislike for the city, which they called osero (bush),¹⁵ and an expressed goal to earn enough to replenish their shrunken livestock herds and return home; to remain pastoralists.

Knowledge and Practices

Anthropological methods such as participant observation, open-ended interviews and narratives can be especially effective for investigations of the lives of people who inhabit the unregulated urban informal sector, based as they are on gaining the confidence of often poor, marginalized, and fearful informants who may have much to risk in revealing their grievances (MacGaffey 1996).

¹⁵ Many Maasai migrants referred to Dar es Salaam with much disdain as “a ‘bush’ (wilderness) full of mosquitoes, cars, and people.”
In order to make “the flux of experience comprehensible,” it is narrative voices that “order the evidence,” to help make clear the ways that participants understand and share their experiences; as a way to access “otherwise unknowable material” the ethnographic method has no substitute (Moore 1994:80). I focus here at the micro-level to present a rich, more vivid reading of an everyday world, using peoples’ own words to evoke their ideas, understandings, motivations, and practices in their daily lives.

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At an oloip in Dar es Salaam I asked an elder, have you heard of AIDS? He said: “Yes, I’ve heard. It is sickness. It has no cure and a person gets very thin till he dies. And we have another disease called UKIMWI.” Several of the men my Maasai research assistant and I were interviewing began to debate this: “That’s another disease – Or are they one and the same? – Isn’t it the same?” UKIMWI, the Swahili acronym for HIV-AIDS, is a term generally recognized, especially by those Maasai who have been in the city a while. But upon deeper probing, it was evident that many were not sure that UKIMWI was the same thing as “AIDS.”

One warrior said: “I don’t know – we hear that it’s a disease and has no cure. One develops spots on his body.”

Three other typical replies from Maasai men in Dar es Salaam when asked what they knew about HIV-AIDS:

- “We hear it being talked about, on radios, from other people.”
- “Oh, it’s in towns.”
- “Oh, we are really scared of it! A disease without cure - even white people have no cure, and we have not found any traditional medicine in this ‘bush,’ so it’s scary.”

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16 See also Mink 1987; Peel 1997; cf. Donham 1999.
In the villages, less is known and there is more puzzlement. People say they hear about it on the radio: “We are told it’s a very bad disease. We have heard of it but it is only the medicine we don’t know.” One man in the rural Kwamadale *enkang* had heard that sharing sharp things with someone who is infected could also cause AIDS. Most informants who had heard of AIDS said they knew it was incurable. But their knowledge and fear is vague, unfocused. Women were less certain; some had heard of it, others had not. Women’s uncertainty about AIDS/UKIMWI was perhaps due to their tendency to have less facility with either KiSwahili or English language, and so their information came largely second- or third-hand, usually from their husbands. They did not know how one gets it, how they are treated, nor had they ever witnessed any victims.

Most disturbing, however, apart from the confusion about exactly what HIV-AIDS is, were the many claims that Maasai could cure the disease. An elder male I talked to in Dar es Salaam at Kijitonyama *oloip* identified himself as a ‘healer’ and said he had used traditional medicine to cure “about five warriors” of this ailment. There was much nodding and general agreement within the group of about 18 men. I believe this is because AIDS is confused with *Enamuratuni*, defined for me variously as ‘a woman’s disease,’ and ‘that which is circumcisable’ – perhaps a reference to the genitals as the site of that disease. Numerous Maasai interviewed thought it might be the same as AIDS. One told us:

For us Maasai, we think [AIDS] is *enamuratuni*. Because in the village we had an example of a Maasai woman who was very pregnant, and got thinner and thinner. And some said it’s because she’s starving. And just on the day she gave birth we took her to the hospital, and the nurses diagnosed her and said she was HIV-positive.

Then they said to her husband, just agree that we inject her and kill her. The husband said no, let her come and die at home. And when they brought her home, a Maasai woman came who knows how to cure *enamuratuni*. She looked at her and saw that she really suffered a lot and had that disease. So she started taking a razor blade and cutting, trying to take out some ‘meats’ - small round things [maggots?], and thereafter, she gave her hot ram’s oil to drink. Up to now, she’s very healthy and gave birth to two more children.
Leaving aside the alarming claim that hospital personnel had suggested ending the woman’s life then and there, this narrative and others like it (some no doubt apocryphal) encapsulate the problem of Maasai knowledge about AIDS. Despite discursively acknowledging the name of the disease and its frightening incurability, AIDS information is commonly intertwined with stories about enamuratuni and the ability of Maasai curers to overcome it.

In the same way that ‘hearing’ about UKIMWI did not necessarily mean true understanding of the mechanisms of the disease, knowledge of condoms did not translate to their active use among these Maasai. When I questioned the men at Mwenge oloip about condoms, one warrior said, “Yes, we hear about it – it is a rubber one puts on his penis. We see them in the shops. [Did you ever use them or know somebody who has?] No.”

In the Mkanyeni village group, some of whom were occasional migrants, the following exchange sums up the general response among respondents regarding condoms:

[Has anyone here ever seen condoms? A few warriors replied:] We’ve seen it with our eyes, but we’ve never put it on. We’ve only peeped through the window of the shop and seen them. [What about the elders?] We haven’t seen it.

Another young murrani offered: “I’ve never seen it, but I’ve heard. And I’ve seen a woman and a man.”

Salama brand condom ads are fairly widespread now in Tanzania, especially in urban areas, even though supplies are limited and there is heavy resistance in some sectors against advertising or using them, among clergy, for example. Although illiterate for the most part, many Maasai migrants were able to name the brand and to recognize distinctive poster ads or packages. But I also heard many anecdotes and stories in Tanzania (even among educated non-Maasai) about imported condoms being of inferior quality, inadequate size, of having holes in them and/or being pre-infected with the HIV virus as a way for outsiders to forcefully ‘control’ African population growth (also cf. Talle 1995:29).
A non-Maasai village woman near Morogoro told me that some men had ‘more sperm’ and therefore these condoms did not suffice; “A man would have to wear 47 of them,” she declared, to the general amusement of her friends in the group. “And besides, we know of some who have gotten AIDS even with a condom.” This type of widespread general ‘knowledge,’ as well as inadequate supplies in the country, thwarts efforts toward condom use for prevention of STDs. While the majority of men in the city could say they knew what a condom was, and there was a broad idea of its purpose, few had seen one. Virtually everyone who was asked – whether in the city or the village – said they had never used or even touched a condom.

After our group discussion had ended, the men at the rural Kwamadale enkang asked what advice I could give them. I said, “Two things: education and condoms.” Picking up on the second, Manyehe asked with mock alarm: “Every time [you have sex]?” When I replied, “Yes, as long as there is migration,” he said, “Oh, that’s awful!” to much general laughter among the group of 20 men. Having little close experience of the disease, these men did not see the point of intruding a condom into their sex lives; it is considered to make the experience ‘not the real thing’ (cf. Talle 1995:28-9).

**Only God Knows: Metaphysics, ‘Morality’ and City Women**

When asked whether there are any dangers facing a migrant in the city, a village elder in Mkanyeni replied: “Yes, there are. They start [getting] disease and there’s drunkenness and theft...” I asked, What disease are you talking about? The elder said, “AIDS – that’s the most dangerous one.” Most were frightened of UKIMWI, as in other places, but everyone said the disease exists only in the towns or cities, and that they had never heard of any Maasai who had contracted it.17

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17 The migrants frequently told as well of other dangers for walimzi on the job – being targeted for attack by would-be thieves at night, and of many Maasai who had been injured or killed in such attacks. If the attack resulted in a robbery of property, and the guard survived, their employer sometimes had them jailed. For this reason, many in Dar es Salaam told us they never give their real names to their employers. I am working on
In Dar es Salaam, when I asked, Do you know how someone gets AIDS? one murrani said, “When he goes around fucking other people’s women.” [Is there any other way?] “That’s the only way I know – through sex.” Maasai men working in Arusha said they sometimes saw used condoms lying along the roads in the morning when they were leaving their night posts. They associated these sightings with the activities of Swahili (non-Maasai) men and prostitutes.

Many male informants were likely to relate explanations like these, offenses against moral probity, such as that UKIMWI could be contracted “when you go loose.” More specifically, some ascribed it to consorting with ‘city’ women: “If you sleep with these town girls you get it.” I questioned the men about their activities, asking, Do you interact with Swahili women in the city? An elder said, “No, because in my case, my wife comes. Even now I have one here. One goes back and the other comes.”

I asked a group at Mwananyamala oloip whether they knew anybody who does interact with non-Maasai women in the city; several began to heatedly debate this:

- No we do not know.
- There are none.
- No, no there are too many! They cannot just stay like that! There must be some who interact!
- If we knew any, we would just say it.

In fact, all but two of the Maasai males I asked said they did not interact (paran; Maa) with Swahili city women. (Given the personal nature of this question, a negative response is perhaps not surprising and might be regarded with some skepticism.) In nearly 50 individual interviews, only one unmarried elder about 40 years old (sheepishly) and a young warrior about 22 (boastfully) admitted to doing so. The remaining men said that they have their wives, girl friends and lovers at home – and that all sex is free there – or, like the elder above, they have an article detailing the urban working conditions of Maasai night watchmen tentatively titled “Fierce ‘Dogs’ are Guarding Here.”

18 The wives came to the city to give aid and comfort to their migrant husbands, but also to take back to their families the money their husbands had earned, to buy food and livestock.
wives who visit them regularly in the city. “So,” they reasoned, “why should we pay for it?” They added that it would be “shameful” if it were known in their community that they had consorted with a non-Maasai woman. But many could testify, nevertheless, that ‘certain’ Maasai had been seen “buying beers for town girls” and that others had taken ‘wives’ in the city.

I believe the migrants’ value-laden comments about HIV/AIDS are associated with messages about decency and sexual morals that predominate in government media and from other official sources. This recent article from an on-line version of The East African newspaper is a typical example:

Tanzanian businessman Reginald Mengi last week drew the ire of Christian and Muslim leaders when he urged them to encourage their followers to use condoms to prevent the spread of HIV… Sheikh Yahya Hussein, head of the Anti-Aids Project of the National Muslim Council of Tanzania, warned that the indiscriminate promotion of condom use would undermine individual morality… He further said [Christian and Muslim] religious leaders were doing God’s work by condemning promiscuity and marital infidelity (Rwambali 2002; emphasis added).

At the Parakuyo enkang near Handeni, we asked whether any migrants later returned home and talked about the dangers of the city. Kosei, a 65-year old elder, said:

Yes, they do, [they talk] about dangerous diseases like UKIMWI. So at home it is told, one, to remember the dangers when you are there, two, know it’s bad, and three, remember when you get employment to be faithful and trustworthy.

Kosei turned to the group, “You warriors are better off answering that question because it’s you whom we tell.” Then a warrior added: “And drinking liquor is bad.”

The proscriptions offered to migrants by their elders at home are a hazy mix of do’s and don’ts in which warnings about AIDS do not necessarily take on any particular urgency. I posed a further question about the rumors and stories we had heard of Maasai men patronizing prostitutes in the Manzese section of Dar es Salaam: Have any of you heard about this? The Parakuyo elder, Kosei, again said, “Ask the warriors.” A murrani replied: “For us, we are a bit different. The people from this area, mostly go to Zanzibar, so we
don’t know.” But in fact in Dar es Salaam there was also a large contingent of Kisongo Maasai migrants from Handeni who could be found at the Mwananyamala oloup. There, the answer to the same question almost inevitably produced finger pointing: The Kisongo insisted that it was those ‘fake’ Maasai who patronized prostitutes. By ‘fake Maasai,’ they said they were referring to Parakuyo and other ethnic groups who are tall and also pierce their ears like Maasai, and who dress and pose as Maasai in order to get jobs as guards.19

At Mkanyeni village in Moipo, again it appeared that most did not know exactly how AIDS is transmitted. A senior elder replied: “We hear from the radio – it’s through sex.” A warrior added, “We really know nothing, only through the radio.”

Does anyone here know how to avoid it? Three men replied:

- It’s hard to avoid getting it.
- No, we don’t know.
- No, there is no way you can avoid it. It’s only God who is helping.

Women at the same village said:

I think it’s that – we only say this for us – we leave it to God, or it is brought by God. And even for that one who gets a child, who knows how the child gets into the stomach? It’s only God.

Several informants in Dar es Salaam made similar references. They hoped God would keep them safe while they were in the city, and allow them “to go home the same way as we came;” that is, without AIDS. These types of responses suggest that some Maasai thought of AIDS – and indeed, even pregnancy – as something metaphysical, as beyond their control. Such narratives indicate that knowledge about how AIDS is contracted or prevented was not accurate or widespread among our respondents, but rather a mingling of hearsay, apprehension, and fatalism.

Migration and Elder Authority

19 The Maasai reputation for fierceness and bravery as warriors has made them sought after as security guards. The general discourse among non-Maasai city dwellers was that most of the Maasai visible in the Dar es Salaam streets these days were Parakuyo, whom they characterized as ‘not pure’ or ‘fake’ Maasai. My data indicated, however, that this was not the case; the majority of our informants were Kisongo.
Data from this study suggest that current circumstances of poverty and immiseration in the rural sector are fostering independent decisions by pastoralists to migrate to cities – decisions not necessarily formulated strictly within and/or by the collective community; that is, individuals acting as agents.\(^{20}\) A common theme was that young men ‘just walked away’ from home, often without consulting their elders, sometimes telling no one that they were leaving. In a few cases, some later discussed it with a wife or father in order to obtain their agreement with the decision. Two women interviewed in Dar es Salaam said they had ‘told’ their husbands only after having made their decision to migrate to town.

But the group of women at Mkanyeni village declared that women must always discuss their decisions and get their husbands’ approval before leaving:

It’s only the husbands we are married to, we tell them. For those who are not married [i.e., widows], they tell their sons and daughters. It is the women who begin the discussion and husbands concur. The woman decides, then he approves.

And if husbands do not approve? “You stay, you do not force it,” said one young woman. Do you know any woman who went anyway without her husband’s approval? “No, I don’t know any,” she insisted, accompanied by nods from several others in the group. This may have been a matter of contextual expediency, in that the elders and husbands of these women were nearby and listening closely to their remarks. But an older woman about 50 years interrupted angrily:

Yes, there are! Me, I went myself. My husband finished his cows because of drunkenness, although we had fields that were never cultivated. But the drinking finished all the cows. So then we [women] went to sell traditional medicines in order to support our families. Try to be very serious; yes, it is true that women go, because they cannot feed their children.

\(^{20}\) This contrasts with Terrence Turner (1991) for the Kayapo and Charles Piot (1999) for the Kabre of Togo. Piot, for example, argues that in African settings the collective community formulates most decisions. (See Piot 1999 for insights on ‘collective identity.’) In other case studies the movement of youth away from villages into the cities was thought to bring about a reduction in the role of elders and family as main socialization agents (Weisner 1997:39; also cf. Koda 1995:143; Ako 1995:157ff).
Spencer (1993:140) has observed that the age system “structures” and encompasses the Maasai existence. In Maasai society, elders safeguard and teach the society’s mores and cultural values. This gerontocratic model is a mainstay of the social organization, and “may be described as the dominant premise of Maasai society” (ibid:141). However, under current circumstances of extreme economic hardship there appears to be general (if reluctant) agreement, albeit some of it tacit, that people do not listen to elders as much as they once did.

Old men such as those in Mkanyeni village bemoaned their missing sons: “Everyone has his son gone.” Asking whether people discuss their decisions before they migrate, we heard:

“No, they don’t discuss it. He only says good-bye to his wife, but not to everyone.” In Dar es Salaam a senior murrani about 37 years old talked about his decision:

I’m the eldest brother – so I left the younger brothers back home. And after I found that it pays, then I went back and got another brother to join me. So no one decided or forced me to come – I only heard and saw people return home. I saw them buying cows, one plowing his shamba [farm], so I decided myself.

Another said: “No one decided [for me], I just found it a good idea, and I came [to Dar es Salaam]. I just informed them that I’m going. They simply said sere [bye].”

At first, warriors and elders alike said that nothing had changed with regard to the customary respect (enkanyit) and ultimate authority that has been culturally intrinsic to elderhood in Maasai society. But further questioning uncovered an almost unanimous admission that “a new wind” has changed things; that this generation is different than before.

Do elders ever try to tell younger men that they should not leave home to go to work in the city? At Mkanyeni, a senior elder, Petro answered:

If somebody does not inform you he is leaving, how can you stop him? What they do is, a murrani sleeps at his wife’s house, and early in the morning just before dawn he leaves, or goes to a nearby enkang to borrow some fare money. The only time you know is when they come to you for the return of the money.

This story was met with knowing and cheerless laughter from the crowd of men assembled in the acacia grove. We asked: Is this the way it has always been in Maasailand?
No. Before, the difference was like this. Yes, before, elders had a lot of power, and made decisions because wherever you went, you had to get his consent. But now when there’s a lot of destitution in families, how can they be in a position to say no when they can no longer provide anything? There is virtually [no elder authority] now, because there’s a Maasai proverb that says: “An eye that went out, knows better.”

My research assistant interpreted this proverb to mean that many Maasai elders have never worked for wages or even seen a city, so they are in a different world from the migrants. They are not in a position to give advice on something that their eyes have never seen.

The current decline in Maasai economic circumstances thus appears to be fostering a greater degree of individualism and less reliance on traditional elder authority. With shrunken livestock herds, elders often seem to be without purpose, having lost their usual jobs as herd managers and decision makers. At the same time, elders’ lack of knowledge about the city and its dangers precludes them giving meaningful advice to migrating juniors, or juniors from accepting it. Nobody we asked said that an elder had given them permission before they migrated; many had not even consulted them.\(^{21}\)

In former hard times such as the *emutai* crises in the late 1800s, warriors have been known to come to the fore within the Maasai community, taking over the roles of elders in some ways (cf. Rigby 1985:174; Spear 1993b:129-30; Waller 1988:111). Women and junior males as decision-makers and migrant wage earners, delayed marriages for males, and even evidence that men are making beaded jewelry, indicate similar contemporary transformations. These factors also intimate that with continued migration further structural changes may be inevitable within the society. This might be felt especially in the realm of gender relations and elder/junior relations or relations of production, barring a resurgence of their livestock economy.

\(^{21}\) Anecdotally, there appears to be a different situation in the area of Tarangire, where elders have encouraged warriors to go to work in nearby gemstone mines (J.T. McCabe, personal communication, 2002).
Maasai ‘failure to modernize’ causes discomfort among administrators and officials. Overwhelmingly, official reactions to pastoralists are repeated attempts (during both the colonial and post-independence eras) to get them to ‘modernize’ by settling down as cattle farmers (cf. Hodgson 1995; Rigby 1985:95). Hon. Edward Lowassa, 22 who identifies as a Maasai, declared near the end of the 1990s that recent Maasai migrations to the city were “shameful” and urged that they all return home immediately. During our interviews in Dar es Salaam, several Maasai men mentioned Lowassa’s remonstrance, invariably greeted with rueful laughter. One elder had this response:

He’s thinking that it is easy to go back home…we discussed it and we know why he says so. He sees us here [in Dar es Salaam] as a shame to the community. But how can we go back home? What arrangements have been made, or can be made, to enable us to do that?

A non-Maasai functionary from a well-known INGO (international non-governmental organization), demonstrating a complete lack of understanding of factors underlying the current migrations, characterized Maasai presence in Arusha as frivolous, people who were merely curious. He further disparaged pastoralists as lazy, inclined to drink alcohol, and to be “surprised by people who smelled like soap”; in other words, as un-modern, unruly ‘country bumpkins.’ His remarks were condescending:

Maasai get drunk at night, act very strange, and of course, because he’s a moran [warrior], he demands more respect than anyone, and gets very belligerent. They see TV [here in town] and think that’s life. They have unrefined ways of thinking.

Sadly, such comments more nearly typified the general discourse than did the following remarks from Allan Kijazi, a Tanzanian at the Africa Wildlife Foundation office in Arusha, who has spent his career working among Maasai:

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22 During the research period, Lowassa was the Member of Parliament for Monduli, a largely Maasai area in Arusha Region, and Minister for Water and Livestock Development.
I personally think [this Maasai migration] is large, big numbers are coming to
towns… They are being badly underpaid, or sometimes not even paid at all… [People
hire them as guards] because they see Maasai as trustworthy. But also, the Maasai
are taken advantage of as cheap labor; they have no idea of their rights… and
[employers] victimize them… Other tribes are now more educated and more aware
of their rights… therefore, they are not hired as much any more. This is not a very good
impression of the nation, people exploited because of ignorance. The government
should look at this seriously, and they should be regarded like any other human
beings.

The main cause [of migration] is that Maasais are being continually marginalized,
their lands taken, the livestock production system declining. They have no
alternatives, as they are not used to agriculture… and most do not have education…
Outsiders move in to cultivate and convert lands [that Maasai] formerly used for
grazing… there is little left… the government has completely neglected this sector.
So the main things are diseases, marginalization of lands [resulting in inadequate]
grazing space, and also droughts.

[What about parks or hunting blocks as a cause of land alienation?] …Hunting
blocks, yes… and to some extent, yes, parks are a cause. This is due to the new
government policy of privatization, which takes huge chunks of land from
Maasailand.23

Nevertheless, in a recent newspaper article Tanzania’s Vice President, Dr. Mohammed
Ali Shein, urged that Maasai turn from the nomadic pastoralist way of life to settle and take up
livestock farming, calling for:

…Tanzanian cattle keepers to do away with the tradition of keeping too big [sic]
numbers of livestock whose contribution economically [is] small and…[which has]

The Vice President’s statement again reflects the persistent notion that livestock grazing is
inherently damaging and continues a long-term government agenda to ‘modernize’ and
‘settle’ pastoralists as the “sure solution to poverty alleviation” (ibid.)

These attitudes imply a need for shifts in policymaking. Because of the history of
negative misconceptions about this population, their rights are not protected. Of essential
importance is the need to pay attention to dire economic, environmental and political

23 For conflicts among conservation interests and local peoples, see Anderson and Grove 1987; Bonner
1993; Brockington 1999; McCabe 2002; McCabe et al. 1992; Neumann 1995; West and Brechin 1991; and
Western 1997. See also Shivji and Kapinga 1998 for a recent review of challenges over Maasai land rights in
the Ngorongoro Conservation Area, northern Tanzania.
circumstances in the rural agricultural and pastoral sector, crippled by multiple problems such as a lack of inputs, credit structures and suitable markets, and perhaps more importantly, issues of equitable access to sustainable land – for grazing and cultivating.

With few alternatives, Maasai move in ever-increasing numbers to seek wage jobs in towns. There, along with other hazards, a lack of accurate information among Maasai about what HIV-AIDS is, how it is contracted and how to prevent it, amplifies the risk for Maasai. Widespread association and confusion of AIDS with the curable disease they know as enamuratuni, together with virtual ignorance and non-use of condoms, presage a potentially devastating impact in that community. Greater numbers of people involved in labor migration and longer stays in town increase prospective associations with non-Maasai urbanites. A probable AIDS disaster would, of course, extend beyond the boundaries of Maasailand and be felt in numerous and complex ways by the Tanzanian health system and the country as a whole.

Fundamentally, urban migrants need less harassment and prejudice, and more educational opportunities and services made available to them. Programs to educate this and other mobile groups about HIV-AIDS and other STDs are critical. While most such programs now target youth, I suggest that this should be reversed in the Maasai case. It appears that at least the rhetoric of enkanyit (respect) for elders still prevails, even though most respondents (junior and senior) admitted that rural elders do not know enough these days to give advice about migration and life in the city. Turning this cultural artifact to advantage, however, elder men and women who now languish in villages, redundant and ‘out of work,’ could be formally trained in the mechanisms and exigencies of HIV-AIDS and could, in turn, train their wives and children, thereby regaining or reaffirming their customary authority with purpose, and accurate – perhaps life-saving – information. Chances are good that a priori respect for elderhood within the culture would predispose youth to take such information more seriously.
than from outside (non-Maasai) authorities. Allowing ignorance in these matters to go unaddressed would certainly ensure catastrophe for the Maasai community.

Non-ambiguous laws are also needed to protect mobile people, including provision of health and other social services, protection of basic rights, training and small capital loans or grants, and ultimately, recognition of migrants as autonomous agents and legitimation of their work in the informal sector. Maasai need to be empowered to earn a living and to find ways to contribute at home. Participatory planning should include pastoralists in order to fairly address their needs (Waters-Bayer and Bayer 1994). And finally, the flexibility and multiplicity of Maasai identities should be acknowledged; they have historically demonstrated the ability to adapt in order to cope with contingencies. There is no reason to believe they will not continue to do so when need arises.

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Bibliography


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