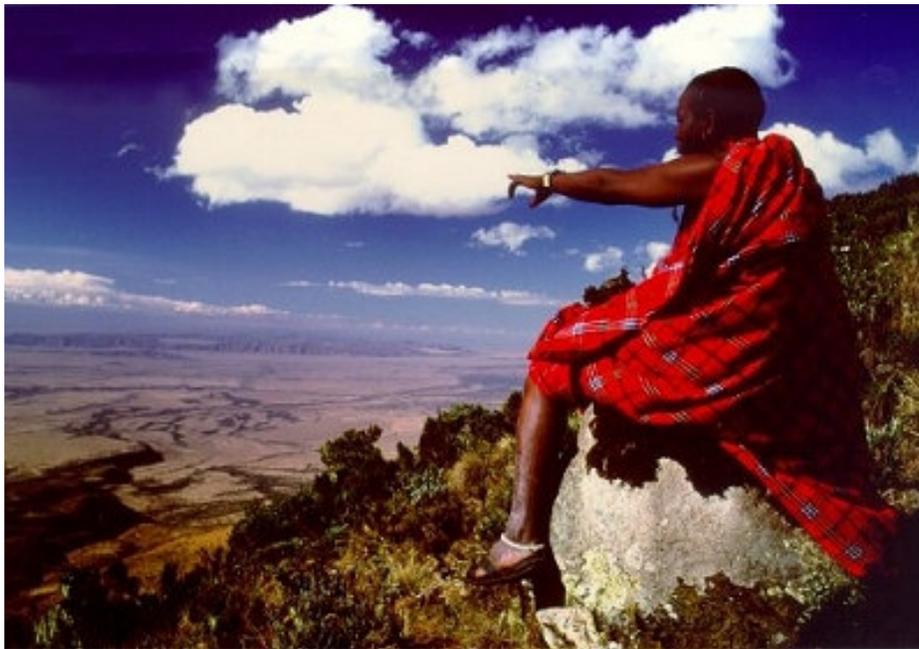


The Maasai

– Changes in Livelihood after Land Loss



<http://electron.cs.uwindsor.ca/~mcleodu/>



<http://www.kirurumu.com/images/ngorongoro%20camp/large/walking.jpg>



<http://www.arches.uga.edu/~africa/UnityStrength.htm>

Abstract

This is a case study about the Maasai and their land rights. The Maasai are semi-nomadic pastoralists, living in southern Kenya and northern Tanzania. It is said that they came to this area, now called Maasailand, about 300 years ago. In the beginning, they were independent and free to walk and graze their cattle without limitations and regulations. But when the British and German colonizers of these countries came to Maasailand, they discovered the advantages of its nature and started creating reserves. The Maasai were not strong enough to resist and it resulted in a land loss of two thirds for them. This has forced them to change their livelihood. They have to combine their pastoral lifestyle with other ways to make a living.

The main purpose with the study is to look at how the land loss has affected the Maasai and their livelihoods. The essay is mainly built on secondary sources, but also on a field work from the Ngorongoro Conservation Area, with qualitative interviews. This is used here, in order to give an example of a conservation area where the Maasai and the wildlife successfully coexist. To be able to understand the changes in Maasai livelihoods, the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach has been adapted. With this approach, a more holistic view of the changes can be made. The land losses have not always brought negative results for the Maasai. They have been able to adapt a multiple livelihood, including pastoralism, agriculture and tourist industry. The Maasai might benefit more by adapting different assets; instead of only rely on one.

Keywords: Maasai, livelihood, land loss, Ngorongoro Conservation Area, Ngorongoro Conservation Area Authority

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Abbreviations

Explanations of the abbreviations appearing in the text:

DFID – Department for International Development

MDP – Maasai Development Plan

NCA – Ngorongoro Conservation Area

NCAA – Ngorongoro Conservation Area Authority

SLA – Sustainable Livelihoods Approach

Glossary

Here follows some important Maa (language of the Maasai) words. Words appearing only once in the text are not included.

Enkaji – Maasai house

Enkang – Maasai village

Morani – Maasai warrior

Ngai – Maasai God

1. Introduction

The issue for land has been debated for many years and it often concerns indigenous people. In almost every country in the world, there has been, or still are conflicts about land rights, between the indigenous people and the authorities. The Indians in America, the Aborigines in Australia and the Maoris in New Zealand are only few examples of indigenous people who, in the past, lived in peace and harmony with the nature. And when the colonizers came to these countries, they lost land to the new settlers without getting any respect for their culture or history. These people did not have the power to fight against the colonizers, and had to surrender.

The Maasai, an indigenous tribe in East Africa, have a history with similar problems. They lived in an area side by side with the wild animals for several hundred years, until the white settlers excluded them from two thirds of their original land. They have been forced to live on limited areas and special reserves. This made it harder for them to support their livestock, partially due to the loss of their most valuable land during dry seasons. Many Maasai cannot earn their living by cattle herding anymore, some have started to cultivate and others work in the tourist trade or leave their homes to find work in the cities.

This essay deals with the Maasai, their situation and how they have been affected by losing land.

1.1. Purpose and research questions

The purpose with this essay is to explain what effects the land losses have had on the Maasai. The intention is to focus on the changes in their livelihoods and on their reactions after the big losses of their original land.

The essay will focus on the following questions:

- How has the land rights for the Maasai changed through the years?
- In what ways have the Maasai been affected by the land losses?
- What opinions do the Maasai have about their situation?

1.2. Methodology and materials

A *qualitative* method for this essay has been chosen instead of a quantitative because the research questions deal with people's situations and actions and not with statistic data.¹ A *case study* has been used as a research strategy, which means that the focus in the essay will be on only one case.² The purpose with a case study is to make a profound report for the specific case it deals with.³ The idea for this essay was to make a profound study about the Maasai, and that is why a case study was selected. If the study would include a number of different indigenous people and their land rights, it would be a more superficial and general research. Furthermore, a comparison between two or more ethnic groups in an essay of this grade would cover too wide of a field and would not give focus on the major topic.

There are many *secondary data* about the Maasai, both in books and on the internet. After the reading, the most relevant information for this essay was sorted out. Some books about conservation areas and human-wildlife conflicts have also been usable for this work.

¹ Trost, Jan, 2005. *Kvalitativa intervjuer*. Third edition. Studentlitteratur: Lund p.8.

² Denscombe, Martyn, 2000. *Forskningshandboken – för småskaliga forskningsprojekt inom samhällsvetenskaperna*. Studentlitteratur: Lund. p.41.

³ Ibid. p.43.

The *empirical materials* in this essay are from a *fieldwork* in Tanzania. I stayed in Tanzania between February 25 and March 19, 2006 and did my fieldwork together with Emma Engström, a student from Environment and Development at Södertörn University College. The fieldwork was made in March 7 in the Ngorongoro Conservation Area (NCA), located in the north of Tanzania (See Appendix 5). The NCA is one of those areas where the Maasai settled down several centuries ago and which has later on been a conservation area with restrictions for the inhabitants. Therefore, this was a good place to make a fieldwork in.

A Maasai man invited us to his village in the NCA. Edward, our fieldwork assistant and interpreter, helped us to translate from Swahili to English. We were then able to make a *group interview*. This interview was qualitative as well. This means that the questions were simple and straight.⁴ This kind of interview amounts, among other things, to understand the respondents' thoughts and feelings and to be aware of their experiences.⁵ I also used a *low level of standardization*. This means that the questions were formulated and adaptable to the respondents and resulting questions were made depending on earlier answers.⁶ The respondents' real names are not shown in the sources, since there was an agreement to protect their identities.

We also went to the Ngorongoro Conservation Area Authority (NCAA), where Emma interviewed a man working there, named Peter Makotia. An interpreter was not needed this time, because Mr. Makotia had good knowledge in English. The aim with the interviews was to get *primary data* from both the Maasai and the authority in the area. For this essay, it was relevant to know what the Maasai thought about their situation and limitation in the area and the authority's opinion about the coexistence of wildlife and people. These empirical material are used as an example in this paper, with opinions from a Maasai family living in the area and from the NCAA.

⁴ Trost, 2005. aa. p.7.

⁵ Ibid. p.23.

⁶ Ibid. p.19.

1.2.1 Source criticism

During the collecting of data for this essay, there occurred some problems. These are presented in this chapter, followed by the measures made to surpass the problems.

Firstly, about the secondary data – It was hard to find relatively new information about the Maasai in the essential books, because most of them were written more than 10 years ago. For that reason, updated information from the internet is used, which may not be as trustworthy as in the books. Due to this, every relevant internet source has been checked up, and the most reliable ones sorted out. This was made by looking at information about the creators of the respective homepages, what they do and how they have collected the data.

Another problem was that many of the sources had different information about the Maasai. The reason could be that the information came from different Maasai villages with different ways of life and the authors may have had different opinions and ideas about the Maasai and their culture. Therefore, the facts have been studied critically and with caution. George Monbiot's book, however, used in the chapter of "Former research" has not a scientific base; it is built on his own experiences. The use of many different sources that are independent of each other, made it possible to make a comparison between these and in that way get trustworthy information.

Considering the group interview, it was decided not to use a recorder, because it could make the informants more retreated and less open in their answers. Without a recorder, all the answers had to be written down. Therefore, it was helpful that we were two about it and could discuss together and fill in each other's gaps after the interview. The respondents chose to be interviewed in their own house, which probably made them feel safe and which also was the only place in the village where the interview could take place without being disturbed. Since the group interview was made with help from an interpreter, there could have occurred misunderstandings during the interview. Especially since none of us, the interpreter, the informants or ourselves, spoke our

respective native language. Moreover, the translator and we could have interpreted the respondents' answers differently.

A group interview can be problematic in the sense that only the most dominant and talkative respondents will be heard. But I think we solved this by asking some of the questions directly to one of them. The answers in a group interview can also be formed after group pressure. In that case, we cannot be completely sure that everyone told us his or her real thoughts and feelings.

This group interview can obviously not take a broad view of what the Maasai in the NCA in general think and feel about their situation. Of course, more interviews could have made the field work a more reliable source, but due to the time limit this could not be made. But by comparing the interview with secondary studies, a good picture of the case can be obtained. And furthermore, the main purpose with the group interview was only to give an example from the NCA. The interview at the NCAA, however, maybe makes a better impression on the authority's considerations in general, since they have the same policy.

1.3. Definitions of conservation

Before the essay continues, a short explanation of conservation will be made. This term is going to be brought up many times in this study, so it is important to understand what it means.

There are different definitions of conservation; the most common is to preserve and use natural resources in ways that keep them in good condition so that future generations can enjoy it. Conservation also means sustainable development, meaning to obtain other resources, which can replace fossil fuels, and to recycle or reuse packages and products. The bigger part of Western conservationists does not aim to do conservation in this manner in indigenous regions. When referring to conservation in these areas they often tend to be based on forming parks or other preserved areas where no humans are allowed to stay.

3. Former research

There are many studies about the Maasai, with many different approaches. This chapter refers to previous studies by George Monbiot and Kaj Århem. These two authors have been chosen because their areas of science are close to this study. They also have some important statements to bring up in this essay. Monbiot writes, among other things, about the Maasai and their feelings after land loss, while Århem concentrates on the Maasai and their rights in Ngorongoro.

Monbiot, author from Great Britain, wrote the book *No Man's Land – An Investigate Journey through Kenya and Tanzania*. In this work, Monbiot tells about his journey in Kenya and Tanzania and the nomads he meets in these countries. He travels around with different local people, including the Maasai. He talks to the Maasai mostly about how they were affected by their big land loss. He also discusses the nomads' situation with authorities.

Through the journey, Monbiot realized that the biggest threat for the Maasai and their environment is conservation.⁷ He asserts that conservation has more negative than positive effects on the people. By taking their best grazing lands, the Maasai are forced into limited places where it is much harder to support their livestock. This results in over-grazing, which is what the conservationists try to avoid. Due to the marginal access to land, many Maasai are unable to continue their pastoral life. Instead, they have to change to agriculture. Another negative effect of prohibiting the Maasai from the parks is that some of their practices that are known as favorable for the wildlife also will exclude. An example of this kind of practice would be the burning of coarse grass and selective grazing, which have contributed to the combination of grass and bushes.⁸ Monbiot refers to different ecologists, who state that big parts of the conservation areas of today, have been shaped by human management. Monbiot says that many Maasai

⁷ Monbiot, George, 1994. *No Man's Land – An Investigative Journey through Kenya and Tanzania*. Macmillian: London. p.3-4.

⁸ Ibid. p.89, 103.

who were forced to move are resentful about conservation.⁹ They had told him that it made them poorer and less safe.¹⁰

Some conservationists tried to help the Maasai with their problems after the expelling. In some places, they built schools and health clinics, dug wells and installed water tanks for the cattle. This helped the Maasai to survive the land loss, but still many problems remained.¹¹

During the journey through the national parks, Monbiot starts to suspect that many times, the conservationists prioritized the tourists. Many conservation officials had told him that they excluded the Maasai from areas because the tourists did not want them to be there. They did not consider if the Maasai were a threat to the environment or not, or if the tourists might do any harm. Monbiot states in his book that: “The Maasai are kept out of lands that have been theirs for centuries; the tourists are welcome in. It appears that the nomads are treated as a problem to be dealt with and the tourists as a people whose beliefs and culture must be protected.” He also writes: “By throwing out the nomads, the conservationists are getting rid of the people who helped to shape the landscape, which are partially responsible for the complex pattern of forest, scrub, grass and swamp that is so important to the wildlife.”¹²

Århem writes about the Maasai in the NCA in the book *Pastoral Man in the Garden of Eden – the Maasai of the Ngorongoro Conservation Area, Tanzania*. He is, at the publishing of the book, an Associate Professor in the Department of Cultural Anthropology, University of Uppsala.¹³ Between 1980 and 1982, he made a field research in the NCA. The book is based on the data from this study with the aim to explain the situation of the Maasai and to analyze their impact on the environment.¹⁴

⁹ Monbiot, 1994. aa. p.83.

¹⁰ Ibid. p.89.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.119-120.

¹³ Århem, Kaj, 1985b. *The Maasai and the State – The impact of rural development policies on a pastoral people in Tanzania*. Iwgia: Copenhagen. p.2.

¹⁴ Århem, Kaj, 1985a. *Pastoral Man in the Garden of Eden – The Maasai of the Ngorongoro Conservation Area, Tanzania*. Almqvist & Wiksell Tryckeri: Uppsala. p.12.

Århem brings up the problem of limited land access for the Maasai and discusses the conflict between the Maasai and the NCAA.

In 1959, when the NCA was created, the Maasai were assured that they had the rights to live and subsist in the area. But in spite of that, rules have made their rights more limited. Yet, the Maasai want to remain in the area. They have lived there for generations and have strong feelings about the area and its environment.¹⁵

With his interviews, Århem gets the opinions from both the Maasai and the authority concerning the development and conservation in the NCA. He found out that the Maasai were not satisfied with all the rules and restrictions coming from the authority. Among these were the prohibition to cultivate and the exclusion from the Ngorongoro Crater. Furthermore, they were prohibited to collect resin in the forests and using fire for managing pasture as much as they were in need of. The Maasai felt unfairly treated by the fact that their mobility was limited, while the wild animals could wander freely. They meant that through their long history of coexistence with the wildlife, they had contributed to protect the beautiful environment of the area.¹⁶

The NCAA's view of the problems in the area differs from the Maasai's. The authority gives priority to the wildlife, the environment and the tourism in Ngorongoro. Århem says that the authority sees the Maasai and their livestock as a threat and that they are unable to coexist with these elements.¹⁷

Århem states that the NCAA itself has been part of the cause to the situation of the Maasai, and to the problems, faced by both parts. He also says that by excluding the Maasai from the area is against the policy of multiple land use, made at the time of the creation of the NCA. Moreover, it disregards the Maasai's wishes to stay in the area.¹⁸

¹⁵ Århem, 1985a. aa. p.96-97.

¹⁶ Ibid. p.95-96.

¹⁷ Ibid. p.96.

¹⁸ Ibid. p.97.

Århem contradicts the statement of the authority – that the Maasai are a threat to the wildlife and environment. He refers to facts that demonstrate that the area has been shaped by the coexistence between pastoralists, their livestock and the wild animals for thousands of years. The way the Maasai live and herd their livestock have created the exclusive environment of NCA.¹⁹

Århem's report shows that the Maasai and their livestock have had very little harmful impact on the environment of the NCA.²⁰ He further states that the system that the Maasai have of pastoral land use certainly will not have a negative effect in the future either.²¹ He says that there is no in-depth study that says that pastoralists in the NCA have harmed the environment.²² During the dry season, the Maasai live in the highlands, where there is plenty of grazing areas, but more scattered and mobile during the wet season. In the raining seasons, the Maasai leave for a temporary location. Århem means that this mobility is a good way of making use of the resources in the area. The Maasai use the grass and water in the most optimal way, while they reduce the risk of disease and scarcity of salt and minerals.²³

¹⁹ Århem, 1985a. aa. p.98.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid. p.57.

²² Ibid. p.38.

²³ Ibid. p.43.

4. Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework for this essay will be the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach (SLA). This approach is a way of thinking about different ways and possibilities for development. It gives priority foremost to people, their livelihoods and strengths.²⁴ The approach is based on the theory that everyone needs a variety of assets to be able to attain a worthy livelihood. This especially concerns poor people, who have almost no access to any asset.²⁵ The purpose of the approach is to give a realistic understanding of the changes in people's livelihoods and its aim is poverty elimination.²⁶

A livelihood contains the capabilities, assets and activities that are needed for a living. Livelihoods are sustainable when they:

- are resilient in the face of external shocks and stresses;
- are not dependent upon external support (or if they are, this support itself should be economically and institutionally sustainable);
- maintain the long-term productivity of natural resources; and
- do not undermine the livelihoods of, or compromise the livelihood options open to, others.²⁷

The SLA focuses on people, and less on their resources and the ruling governments. Another focus is on their strengths, rather than needs. It listens to the people's own opinions and tries to help them to reach their goals. The approach has a holistic view and is suitable for every part of the world and all kinds of people. It emphasizes the multiple livelihood strategies, which people maintain, in purpose to secure their livelihoods. The purpose is to get a truthful understanding of the factors that shapes the

²⁴ <http://www.livelihoods.org/enquirydesk/enquiryFAQ.html#6> Institute of Development Studies, 2006. *Enquiry Desk*. Last Modified: 2006. Accessed: 2006-06-11. 16.00.

²⁵ Department for International Development (DFID), 1999b. *Sustainable Livelihoods Guidance Sheet*. Section 2. p.5.

²⁶ *Ibid.* p.1.

²⁷ Department for International Development (DFID), 1999a. *Sustainable Livelihoods Guidance Sheet*. Section 1. p.7.

livelihoods and how these diverse factors can be transformed in a way that a more beneficial livelihood outcome can be achieved.²⁸

Anthony Bebbington applied the sustainable livelihood strategy in his analyze of rural livelihoods in 1999.²⁹ He stresses the importance of a holistic view and means that it is needed to regard livelihoods in terms of five types of capital assets. These are human, social, cultural, natural and produced capitals. He says that it is particularly important to have a broad understanding of these assets, when the livelihoods change from being based on natural resources to being based on income sources and product and labor markets. Bebbington sees the assets as “vehicles for instrumental action (making a living), hermeneutic action (making living meaningful) and emancipatory action (challenging the structures under which one makes a living).”³⁰ The mentioned types of capitals make livelihood strategies possible, give capabilities to people, and make livelihoods meaningful and viable.³¹

Bebbington states that people owning significant amounts of land, having economical resources or having strong social networks and education are more likely to access and influence different institutions, both state and market. They can be seen as more powerful than the others.

The SLA will be used in this essay as a means to understand the changes in livelihoods of the Maasai. In the beginning the Maasai only relied on their livestock and had a nomad lifestyle. This has changed due to the fact that big parts of their original land have become conservation parks, created to protect the wildlife and in the sake for tourist attraction. Many Maasai could not continue as pure pastoralists due to the limited access to land. They had to combine the pastoralist lifestyle with other tasks, in other words – maintain a multiple livelihood. Some have now started to cultivate and others have found work elsewhere, as in the tourist industry.

²⁸ DFID, 1999a. aa. p.5-6.

²⁹ Bebbington, Anthony, 1999. *Capitals and Capabilities – A Framework for Analysing Peasant Viability, Rural Livelihoods and Poverty*. World Development. Vol.27. No. 12. p.2021.

³⁰ Ibid. p.2022.

³¹ Ibid. p.2028.

5. The Maasai

To understand the land issue and the problems that the Maasai face, it is important to be aware about their history, culture and traditions. This chapter gives basic information about these factors.

The Maasai are defined as an indigenous East African tribe. Most Maasai live along the Great Rift Valley that overlaps the border of Kenya and Tanzania. There are roughly 500'000 Maasai people living in this region, called *Maasailand*, (See Appendix 1) within an area of about 160'000 km². The number of people varies a lot in different sources and is therefore not very trustable.³²

5.1. The history of the Maasai

Even for the Maasai themselves their history is uncertain. There are many stories about where the Maasai came from and how they get to the place where they live today. But the statement that they came from the north of Africa appears in every story. Most researchers believe that they came from the Nile Valley of the present Sudan between the 14th and 16th centuries. They state this partly because the Maasai speak a language, called Maa, which is a sub-group of the Nilotic languages. They migrated towards the Great Rift Valley and reached their present-day region in the 17th or 18th centuries.³³

³² <http://maasai-association.org/maasai.html> Maimai, Ole. *Maasai People*. Last modified: N/A. Accessed: 2006-02-07. 10.30, Brett, Michael, 1995. Maasai. Struik Publishers: Capetown. p.2.

³³ <http://www.bluegecko.org/kenya/tribes/maasai/history.htm> Filke, Jens, 2003b. *Maasai – History*. Last modified: 2003. Accessed: 2006-02-07. 18.00, <http://www.great-adventures.com/destinations/tanzania/maasai.html> Adventures Great and Small, 2005. *The Maasai*. Last modified: 2005. Accessed: 2006-02-07. 16.00.

5.2. The Maasai society

The Maasai live in their own type of village, called an *enkang*, consisting of 10-20 small houses, or *enkajis*. The village is surrounded by a round fence of sharp acacia branches, which protects the people and their cattle from wild animals and rival tribes. The women have the task to build the round-formed enkajis (See Appendix 2) with branches, grass and fresh cattle manure. They make a fire inside the enkaji for cooking, but also in purpose to keep warm at nights and to keep insects away. These houses have no windows or chimneys but sometimes there is a tiny hole in the ceiling that lets a little light in and lets the smoke from the fire out. Apart from being responsible for building and maintaining the enkajis, the Maasai women take care of the young children and their old parents, milk the cattle, prepare food and collect water and firewood.³⁴

When a boy is only about five years old, his father starts to teach him how to take care of and support the cattle of the family. And after about 10 years, the boy has the main responsibility of the animals. To attain adulthood, both boys and girls have to go through a circumcision by the ages between 13 and 17. Age related boys go through a group-circumcision, a ceremony that signifies a boy's transition into manhood.³⁵ After the circumcision, the group leaves their families and march together to a particular place, where they build their temporary house, called *Manyatta*. They stay there, together as warriors (*Morani*) for a period of 8-12 years. The purpose is that they shall learn and develop their survival skills. The main tasks for the Moranis are to defend their enkang and its cattle from wild animals and rival tribes, search for new pastures for the cattle and raid cattle to expand their herds (The raiding is however illegal today). When a Morani has gone through a marriage ceremony, he can marry one or more women.³⁶

A girl's circumcision signifies a passage to womanhood. After the ritual, the young women wear headdresses, as a sign of fertility. During their recovery period, (about six

³⁴ <http://www.masai-mara.com/mmmaa.htm> Youngman, Jeremy. *The Maasai*. Last modified: N/A. Accessed: 2006-02-07. 14.00, Hodgson Dorothy L, 2001. *Once Intrepid Warriors*. Indian University Press: Bloomington. p. 279.

³⁵ www.great-adventures.com aa.

³⁶ www.masai-mara.com. aa.

weeks) the women are not supposed to talk to men or strangers. After this process, the women are allowed to get married and have children.³⁷

Male seniors are highly respected in the Maasai society. In the council of elders, they take all the important decisions affecting the community. Many of the elders' former tasks are taken over by the younger men. The most respected of the elders is a spiritual leader and healer, called *laibon*. When a Maasai woman gets old, she gains more respect and power over her *enjang*.³⁸

5.3. Religion

The Maasai have their own religion and believe in a God called *Ngai*. They say that *Ngai* gave all the cattle to the Maasai people, and that is why they raided cattle from other people in the past and meant that they belonged to the Maasai tribes.³⁹ In the 19th century, an increase of missionaries came to Kenya and tried to adapt tribes to Christianity.⁴⁰ Nowadays approximately 25 % of the Maasai are Christians.⁴¹

5.4. The value of cattle

The Maasai are semi-nomadic pastoralists (herdsmen, who sometimes have to move around to search for new grazing land) for whom their livestock mean everything. Cattle are the most valuable of all Maasai livestock and signify wealth and status in their society. It is very seldom that the Maasai kill a cow. It happens only when a cow is ill or when there are absolutely nothing else to eat. The Maasai put a lot of work into the cattle. They have to seek for good grazing all the time and to walk very far when the land suffers from drought. A Maasai family has often other animals as well, such as goats, sheep and sometimes donkeys.⁴² The latter, are an important source of

³⁷ Brett, 1995. aa. p.31.

³⁸ Ibid. p.43-44.

³⁹ The Diagram Group, 1997. *Peoples of East Africa*. Facts On File Inc: New York. p.75.

⁴⁰ www.masai-mara.com. aa.

⁴¹ <http://bluegecko.org/kenya/tribes/maasai/> Filke, Jens, 2003a. *Maasai – Introduction*. Last modified: 2003. Accessed: 2006-02-07. 18.00.

⁴² www.masai-mara.com. aa.

transportation, especially for the women. They use them to carry water long distances and to transport products to markets for sale.⁴³

The value of cattle and the need to move freely shows how important land is for the Maasai. With a limited access to land, they cannot continue to live as solely pastoralists. They have to adopt other ways to support themselves. The next chapter will show how the land rights of the Maasai have changed through the years.

⁴³ Igoe, 2004. aa. p.8.

6. Land rights for the Maasai

The Maasai have lived in a region in southern Kenya and northern Tanzania for about 300 years side by side with wild animals. But the governments in these countries have changed this more and more over the years. The Maasai and their livestock are no longer allowed to live in and to use the land that they originally had access to. Most of their former land is instead used for commercial cultivation and national parks and they have now lost two thirds of their original land.⁴⁴

6.1. History

Maasailand has a good geographical and ecological mix that offers different activities as, for example, pastoralism, farming, conservation and tourism. This has attracted, and still attracts, people from different places. The pressure on the resources has been immense and it all started with the colonial administration.⁴⁵

6.1.1. The colonial period

There were several civil wars among the Maasai during the 19th century.⁴⁶ In the 1880s and 1890s the Maasai suffered from smallpox, cholera, drought, famine and their cattle were affected by rinderpest (a deadly cattle disease). The Maasai population decreased from about 500'000 to only 40'000 and the Maasai herds were reduced by 80%.⁴⁷ More civil wars broke out.⁴⁸ By 1899, The British colonization of Kenya had reached Nairobi, where the Maasai territory began. When the British tried to take control of their land, the Maasai refused to yield. But after several years in conflict with the British, thousands more Maasai died and they could only accept the big land loss in 1904 and

⁴⁴ www.masai-mara.com. aa, www.great-adventures.com. aa.

⁴⁵ Ndagala, Daniel Kyaruzi, 1992. *Territory, Pastoralists and Livestock – Resource Control among the Kisongo Maasai*. Gotab: Stockholm. p.42.

⁴⁶ The Diagram Group, 1997. aa. p.7.

⁴⁷ www.bluegecko.org. aa.

⁴⁸ The Diagram Group, 1997. aa. p.71.

they were restricted to reserves.⁴⁹ The Germans in Tanzania, however, did not manage to place the Maasai into reserves. But they still lost valuable land in the area around Mount Kilimanjaro and Mount Meru, to the colonists and farmers.⁵⁰ After the German loss in the World War One, the British took over Tanzania. And after that, followed a time of peace and prosperity among the Maasai, but soon they lost more land.⁵¹

In 1945, big parts of Maasailand were set aside for National Parks, Reserves and local councils.⁵² The Maasai were forced to lesser areas and they lost some of their best grazing land that had been particularly important in times of draught.⁵³ The Maasai Development Plan (MDP) was created in 1950 to compensate the Maasai for their land losses, as one of its purposes. One of the aims of the plan was to make better services, as pipelines, dams and boreholes. The program ended five years later.⁵⁴

6.1.2. Kenyan independence

The land loss for the Maasai continued even after the Kenyan independence (1963) when President Jomo Kenyatta ruled.⁵⁵ Big parts of Maasailand was divided into private farms or sold to big landowners.⁵⁶ Simultaneously, the Maasai lost even more land due to the creation of Maasai Mara Game Reserve and were prohibited from that area.⁵⁷ The new government thought that by settling the Maasai and breaking up their land, it would be good for both the Maasai and the country. Furthermore, they meant that it would make the Maasai cease to over-graze the savannahs and instead turn them into money earners. The government hoped that Kenya and its industrial base would benefit from this.⁵⁸

⁴⁹ www.bluegecko.org. aa.

⁵⁰ Århem, 1985b. aa. p.34.

⁵¹ Århem, 1985a. aa. p.19.

⁵² Spear, Thomas - Waller, Richard, 1993. *Being Maasai*. East African Educational Publishers: Nairobi. p.262.

⁵³ Ndagala, 1992. aa. p.44.

⁵⁴ Århem, 1985a. aa. p. 19.

⁵⁵ www.bluegecko.org. aa, <http://www.landguiden.se/> Utrikespolitiska institutet. *Afrika, Tanzania*. Last modified: N/A. Accessed: 2006-05-18. 19.30.

⁵⁶ The Diagram Group, 1997. aa. p.72.

⁵⁷ www.bluegecko.org. aa.

⁵⁸ Monbiot, 1994. aa. p.55.

6.1.3. Tanzanian independence

Tanzania became independent in 1961, with Julius Nyerere as the first president. Nyerere made sure that many national parks were created; among these were Tarangire National Park.⁵⁹ In 1973, a villagization program was created, with the restriction that Tanzanians in rural areas were obliged to move to nucleated villages. One year later, the program was implemented in Maasailand. The purpose was to locate the Maasai in so called livestock development villages, which had limited borders. One year later there were at least 2000 Maasai living in these villages, without much of resistance. In some cases the program went too far – as in Ngorongoro, where it happened that the Maasai was forced to move after their settlements in the area had burned down on purpose.⁶⁰ There were mixed feelings among the Maasai about the program. Some of them hoped that it would give them rights to keep using their land, to become independent and get economic security.⁶¹ Others saw the program as just another governmental attempt to take advantage of their land. They were worried about the affects and feared that they might have to give up their traditional way of living.⁶²

The exclusion of the Maasai from national parks continued in the name of the Conservation Act of 1974. Its purpose was to protect wildlife and benefit tourism. The act also changed the authority for the forthcoming planning of development in Serengeti, Ngorongoro and Tarangire National Parks, from the Maasai District Council to the National Parks. The government wanted the Maasai to be more productive in the use of the land that remained for them. They had to improve their care of livestock, so that they produced more. Furthermore the authorities wanted the Maasai to contribute more cattle and in that way benefit the country.⁶³

⁵⁹ Igoe, 2004. aa. p.97.

⁶⁰ Århem, 1985a. aa. p.23-24.

⁶¹ Århem, 1985b. aa. p.41.

⁶² Ibid. p.44.

⁶³ Hodgson, 2001. aa. p.162.

6.2. Changes for the Maasai

This section points out the changes for several Maasai and their lifestyles in recent years. Many Maasai have been forced to change their lifestyles, due to the land losses. The decrease of territory, the installation of water supplies and government policies has diminished their mobility.⁶⁴

Nowadays, most Maasai can no longer rely on their traditional lifestyle, as nomadic pastoralists, because it requires access to land. Gradually, they have started to cultivate and grow maize, vegetables and barley to sell it to breweries.⁶⁵ But in many places in Maasailand, the soil is too arid to make profitable crops.⁶⁶ With all the controls and laws, the Moranis have not been capable to continue with all their commissions as Maasai warriors (e.g. the cattle raiding).⁶⁷ The Moranis often help their parents to support themselves as pastoralists, by selling cattle in the markets or to move into the cities to find work. It is not common for Moranis to finish high school.⁶⁸

Modern influences are increasingly affecting the Maasai culture and they have started to take advantage of tourists coming to their region. Tourism is an important income source for both Kenya and Tanzania. State officials attract tourists by presenting the Maasai as traditional and primitive Africans in different media, as travel brochures and tourist guides.⁶⁹ Some Maasai have jobs at tourist camps.⁷⁰ They also get an income by selling bead jewelry and craftwork, parading, dancing and opening their homes for tourists.⁷¹ These homes are often built only for the tourists. The Maasai then build a traditional enkaji, but they do not live there. And sometimes when the Moranis dance for the tourists, they make up the songs and dances only for that occasion. Many of the

⁶⁴ Ndagala, 1992. aa. p.171.

⁶⁵ www.bluegecko.org. aa.

⁶⁶ Igoe, 2004. aa. p.5.

⁶⁷ www.masai-mara.com. aa.

⁶⁸ Igoe, 2004. aa. p.6.

⁶⁹ Hodgson, 2001. aa. p.150.

⁷⁰ www.bluegecko.org. aa.

⁷¹ www.masai-mara.com. aa.

Maasai who perform for the tourists have lost their land and animals due to privatization and conservation and see no other way to make money, but the income is often low.⁷²

This chapter has shown how the land rights for the Maasai have changed through the years, starting with the colonial period in both Kenya and Tanzania. And then how the transition to independence in the respective countries affected their rights. And the last section dealt with the affects in the livelihoods of the Maasai.

Next chapter demonstrates an example from the NCA. It presents the feelings and thoughts of some Maasai living in the area, about how they look at the changes of land rights and what they think about the NCAA. Furthermore, it presents reflections from the NCAA about the coexistence of Maasai, their livestock and the wild animals in the area and also the authority's cooperation with the Maasai.

⁷² Monbiot, 1994. aa. p.113, www.masai-mara.com. aa.

7. Maasai in the Ngorongoro Conservation Area

Before a presentation of the fieldwork in Ngorongoro, this section will give some relevant background information about the NCA and the Maasai living in this area.

The NCA is located in northern Tanzania and borders the Serengeti National Park to the north-west. The NCA was established in 1959 and has an area of almost 8300 km² and vary in altitude from 1020 m to nearly 3600 m.⁷³ The Ngorongoro Crater, with about 300 km², lies in the centre and has a great concentration of wildlife.⁷⁴ There are between 25'000 and 2,5 million (depending on the season) animals in the area. The mission of the NCAA is:

- The conservation and development of natural resources
- Promotion of tourism
- Promotion of the interests of local communities engaged in cattle ranching and dairy industry
- Promotion of infrastructure development⁷⁵

The aim with the NCA is to maintain multiple land use where pastoralism, conservation of national resources and tourism can coexist.⁷⁶

The Maasai came to the NCA about 200 years ago and today there are approximately 42'000 Maasai living in the area. The Maasai are forbidden to live and cultivate in the Ngorongoro Crater, but they are allowed to take their animals for water and grazing down to the Crater. However, in the rest of the NCA the Maasai are permitted to wander without restraint.⁷⁷ Some chosen Maasai houses in the area are open for tourists to visit and learn more about the Maasai culture and to buy their handicrafts. This makes it possible for the Maasai to get a small income.⁷⁸

⁷³ Bernard, Roger. *Ngorongoro, Tanzania*. Coyote fotografx: Stäfa, Switzerland p.2.

⁷⁴ Ibid. p. 5.

⁷⁵ Ibid. p.2.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Ibid. p.8.

⁷⁸ <http://www.ngorongoro-crater-africa.org/customs.html> Ngorongoro Conservation Area Authority. *Maasai*. Last modified: N/A. Accessed: 2006-05-18. 12.00.

7.1. Fieldwork in the Ngorongoro Conservation Area

The fieldwork for this essay was carried out in March 7, 2006 together with Emma Engström in the NCA. Edward, our fieldwork assistant, helped us to get in contact with the Maasai in the area. He introduced us to a Maasai man who later invited us to his enkang. We interviewed five Maasai in the village. The respondents consisted of a mother, two of her sons and their wives. Edward was our interpreter and translated from Swahili to English. We asked questions about their lives and situation. The main questions for this essay concerned their opinions about their situation and the limitation in the area and their relationship with the NCAA.

The family's livestock consisted of cows, sheep and goats. They had a round enclosure, where they kept the animals to protect them from predators and other threats. When it is rainy and cold, the cows and calves live inside the enkaji. They started to grow maize and potatoes in 1996, when they realized that the livestock were not enough to rely on. The mother had seven children, of whom three or four had moved to the city to find work.⁷⁹

All the respondents were satisfied with their situation and they had a good relationship with the authority. They told us that their conditions were better nowadays and that they accepted the rule that they are not allowed to live in the Ngorongoro Crater. They said that the wild animals enjoy living there and that it is better for the Maasai and their cattle to live up in the village. Their biggest problem was the scarcity of water and they were allowed to go down to the Crater with their animals to get water. It happens hardly ever that a wild animal hurt or kill their livestock. They talked about their relationship to the lions, and that those predators know, from birth, that the Maasai are kind people and that they need to keep a distance. The Maasai estimated that of the total 360, there were about 100 Maasai working in the NCAA.⁸⁰

⁷⁹ NCA, Group interview, 2006-03-07. Ngorongoro Conservation Area, Tanzania.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

Emma and I also went to the NCAA, where she interviewed Peter Makotia, who worked there. He happened to be a Maasai as well. With this interview, information on the rules for the people living in the area was most relevant for this work. Mr. Makotia confirmed what the Maasai had told us, that the authority and the Maasai had a good cooperation and contact with each other. He said that since the 1970s the Maasai have helped the authority, by reporting when they discovered something wrong in the area. The main rule for the Maasai was that they were not allowed to live in the crater or in the forest. But they were allowed to take their cattle down in the crater to search for water during dry seasons. They were also allowed to take their cattle to the forest if they needed and they could use the forest traditionally, for example to collect firewood. But there were some endangered tree species, which they were not allowed to use, and the Maasai knew all these species. They may cultivate, but only for their own support. The Maasai and other people living in the area get 600 million Tanzanian shillings from the authority per year as compensation. If an animal belonging to the Maasai is injured by a wild animal, the NCAA will support them with economical costs.⁸¹

The NCA is a good example where the Maasai can live their traditional lives without disturbing the wild animals and where the authority understand and compensate the Maasai. Both parts seem to be satisfied.

⁸¹ Makotia, Peter, Interview, 2006-03-07. Ngorongoro Conservation Area Authority, Head Office, Tanzania.

8. Analysis

Land has always been important for the Maasai and a contributing factor for them to be able to continue as semi-nomadic pastoralists. Their cattle mean everything and they often have to walk long distances to find good grazing and water. But after big land losses, they cannot support their cattle in the same extent as before. They instead have to combine the pastoralist lifestyle with other ways to support themselves.

According to George Monbiot, the biggest threat for the Maasai is conservation, to which they lost their best grazing lands. He says that the conservationists prior the tourist market care less for both the wellbeing of the Maasai and the environment. They exclude the Maasai and bring in the tourists, and do not care whether it is best for the environment or not. Monbiot states that the Maasai have helped to shape the landscape and that some practices of the Maasai in fact are benefiting the wildlife.

When Kaj Århem visited the NCA in the beginning of the 1980s, it was clear to him that the Maasai were dissatisfied and disagreed with the NCAA. They said that there were too many rules and restrictions. They felt unfairly treated, since they had not access to the land that they had molded themselves. Århem says that the NCAA sees the Maasai and their livestock as a threat to the environment and the wildlife. He points out that the NCAA has been part of the consequences and problems in the area. By excluding the Maasai, the NCAA ignores the policy of multiple land use in the NCA. Århem refers to facts that say that the area has been shaped by the coexistence of the Maasai, their livestock and the wild animals for thousands of years.

Things have changed and according to the empirical material, made in 2006 for this study, the Maasai and the NCAA had another view of the situation. The Maasai were satisfied and said that things were better nowadays. Their relationship with the NCAA had been improved and they accepted the fact that they were forbidden to live in the Crater. Mr. Makotia at the NCAA was also positive to the cooperation between the authority and the people living in the area. He saw no difficulties in the multiple land

use and the Maasai, with their long experiences in the area, help the authority to keep surveillance in the NCA.

The possible reasons for their satisfactions could be that there are more Maasai working for the NCAA today. These employees may have a better understanding of the wishes from the Maasai, and can therefore compromise and make the NCA a better place for all parts. Some rules have also weakened a bit (the Maasai are now allowed to cultivate, for their own support). This could be the result of the authority's understandings for the Maasai, and it makes the Maasai feel trust in the authority. They also get compensation for living in the area, which makes it easier for them to support themselves, in spite of the limited area. Moreover, the NCA offers possibilities to work in the tourist industry, since a great amount of tourists visit the area every year. The Maasai are able to work in camps or to show the tourists their traditional homes and sell handicrafts. All these factors may have positive outcomes for the Maasai and makes them feel comfortable in the area and with the NCAA.

It looks like Monbiot and Århem see the Maasai as pure pastoralists and they see only negative consequences from land loss. But by adapting the SLA a more holistic view of the problem can be made. This means that one should not only focus on the land issue, but also to see alternative livelihoods and to balance the advantages and disadvantages of every change in the livelihood.

Since the Maasai have lost land, or natural capital, they have to compensate this, by adopting other assets, in order to achieve a positive livelihood. They have now implemented a multiple livelihood, including pastoralism, agriculture and sometimes work in the tourist industry. Network, or social capital, is an important factor during the transition of livelihood, and sometimes the Maasai have this advantage, because there are quite many Maasai working for the authorities (e.g. for the NCAA). This makes it easier for the Maasai during their transition, and they might even gain more by adopting multiple livelihoods; instead of just rely on one capital asset.

9. Concluding summary

This essay has been dealing with the Maasai and their changes in livelihood due to land losses. The majority of the Maasai, about 500'000, live in a region called Maasailand, along the Great Rift Valley, on both sides of the Kenyan and Tanzanian border. They came to this area about 300-400 years ago. They live in their own type of village with round houses. They have traditional rituals that they still maintain, e.g. the circumcision for both boys and girls, in order to attain adulthood. Most Maasai believe in Ngai, their own God. It is said that Ngai gave all cattle to the Maasai. Cattle are very important for the Maasai and they often have to walk long distances to find good grazing and water. Many Maasai even have sheep, goats and donkeys in their village.

The Maasai have had a long history of land conflicts with authorities. It started already in the end of the 1800s, when the British came to Kenya, and later to Tanzania, where also the Germans came. The colonizers took control over the land and set the Maasai in reserves. Even after the independence in both countries, the land loss continued due to new restrictions. Big parts of their best grazing land was either sold to big-scale farmers or turned into conservation areas. The Maasai were struggling in hope to keep their original land and in that way their traditional lifestyle, as nomadic pastoralists. But the authorities have always been stronger and ignored the wishes.

The Maasai have now lost about 70 % of their land. As a consequence, many Maasai cannot preserve their traditional lifestyle; they have to find other ways to make a living. Many have started to cultivate and to work in the tourist business. Others have moved to other places to find work.

A fieldwork was carried out for this essay in the Ngorongoro Conservation Area (NCA), in northern Tanzania, with an area of about 8300 km². The conservation area was established 1959, with the aim to maintain multiple land use with the coexistence of pastoralists, wildlife and tourism. The Ngorongoro Crater lies in the middle of the NCA and has a huge amount of wild animals. There are about 42'000 Maasai living in the

NCA today. They are not allowed to live in the Crater, but they are permitted to go down there with their cattle to get water.

A group interview with a Maasai family and an interview with a man working for the Ngorongoro Conservation Area Authority (NCAA) was made. The Maasai were satisfied with their situation and had a good relationship and cooperation with the NCAA. Besides from herding their livestock, they cultivated maize and potatoes. Mr. Makotia, at the NCAA was also satisfied with the authority's relationship with the Maasai and said that they were good cooperators, and helped the authority to discover any harms in the area.

Looking back on their history, it is obvious that the Maasai have suffered, and have had hard times to maintain a living. But there have not always been bad results. The NCA is a great example of a conservation area which can be benefited by all parts – the people, the animals, the authority and tourists. This place is however unique, and there are certainly other places where the Maasai are not at all satisfied with their situation. But if the authorities endeavor to achieve a multiple land use in more conservation parks, there could be a positive outcome with pleased inhabitants, living in harmony with the animals and the nature. Accordingly, the authorities should care more about the Maasai's feelings and wishes, and not only on the incomes from tourists. If the Maasai feel accepted and that they can trust the authorities, they may be willing to cooperate and help the authorities to preserve the nature and wildlife. With their experiences of the nature, they could also assist to guide tourists, which would be a way in helping the country to attract more tourists.

With help from the SLA, a holistic view can be made of the changes in livelihood for the Maasai. The Maasai have started to adapt a multiple livelihood, in purpose to support themselves in the best way. The Maasai may benefit more from this multiple livelihood, than they did when they only had one way of supporting themselves. But the most important thing, when it comes to livelihoods is however, in my own opinion, that they should be satisfied with their situation and enjoy what they do. And if that means being pastoralists, then they should be given the possibility to live as such.

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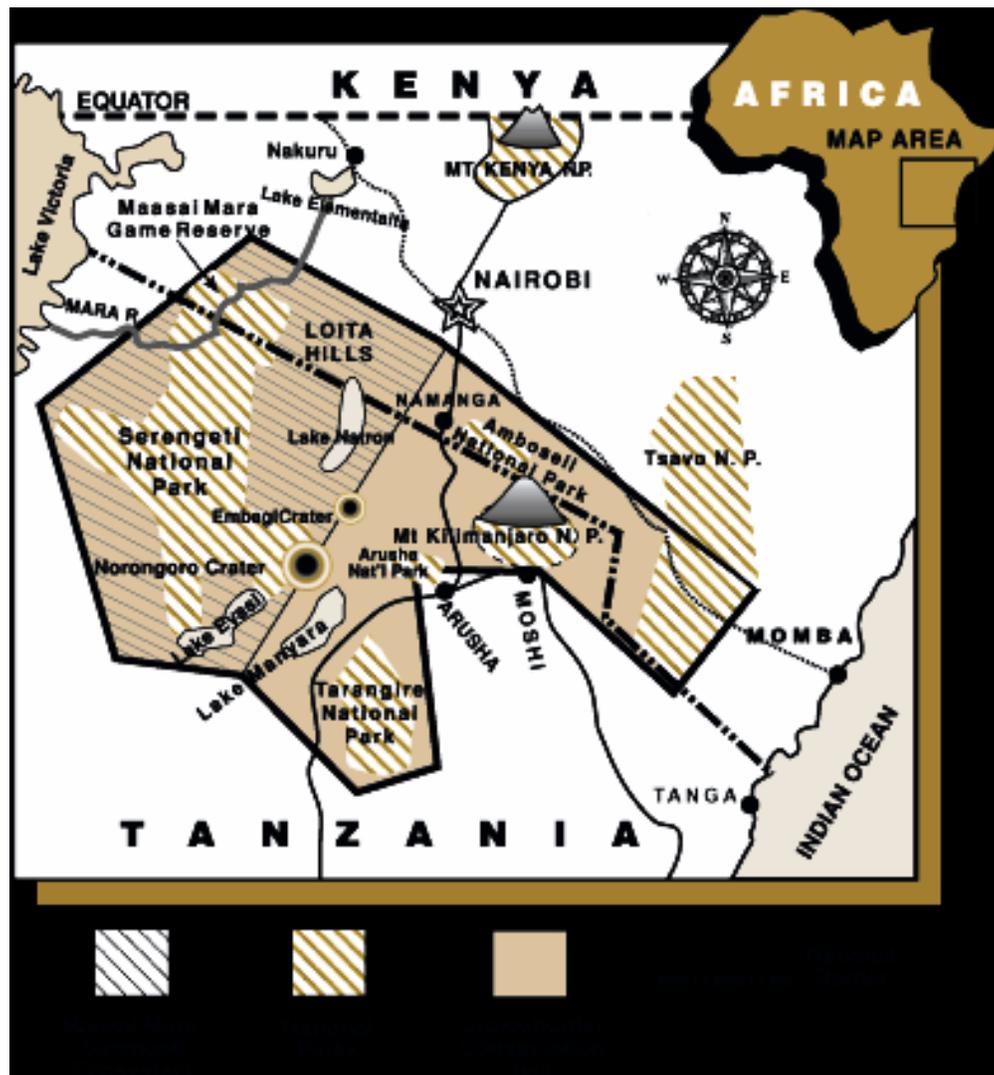
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11. Appendix

11.1. Appendix 1: Map of Maasailand



<http://www.maasaierc.org/maasailand.htm>

Details:

Blue-striped field: Maasai Mara-Serengeti Ecosystem

Brown-striped field: National Parks

Pink field: Cross-boarder Conservation belt

11.2. Appendix 2: Typical Maasai house



www.hoopoe.com

11.3. Appendix 3: Maasai and their cattle



<http://www.ngorongoro-crater-africa.org/multiple-use.html>

11.4. Appendix 4: Maasai settlement



http://www.tomuphoto.com/albums/Maasai/Maasai_village_rest.jpg

11.5. Appendix 5: Map of the NCA



<http://www.african-safari-journals.com/image-files/tazaniangorongoromap.jpg>

11.6. Appendix 6: Maasai village in the NCA



Photograph by author

11.7. Appendix 7: Maasai men in the NCA



<http://www.saferidesafaris.com/images/NGORO.JPG>

11.8. Appendix 8: The Ngorongoro Crater



Photograph by author