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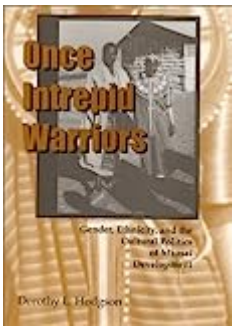

Dorothy L. Hodgson. *Once Intrepid Warriors: Gender, Ethnicity, and the Cultural Politics of Maasai Development.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001. xiv + 333 pp. $44.95 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-253-33909-6.

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Seeing Maasai

This book offers a complex, engaging study of development interventions among Maasai in Tanzania from the early colonial period through the mid-1990s. It historicizes development as an analytic category, as a transnational process, and as lived experience through careful attention to the workings of culture, power, and place.[1]

Reading ethnographic and archival sources together, Hodgson details how the interpenetrated meanings, practices, and interpretations of development and Maasai-ness have shifted over more than eighty years. The book traces what Hodgson terms the "paradox" of development among Tanzania Maasai: how nine decades of development interventions have actually limited security and opportunity (p. 6). Its theme is that the failures of development interventions reside primarily in their unchanging formulations of Maasai culture as essentially "conservative," "pastoralist," and gendered male.[2]

Hodgson's argument is three-fold. First, she proposes that while Maasai themselves have changed individually and collectively over the last eighty years, images of Maasai cultural stasis have not. Second, these images have consistently molded how administrators, non-governmental organizations, and a host of other development agents and practitioners have imagined and implemented development interventions among Maasai. Third, the invariability of these images, Hodgson argues, (re)produces fixed, though not especially accurate, conceptions of the "problems" of Maasai development and, in turn, a set of largely unchanging formulae to deal with them.

The book ably develops these arguments through a sharply theorized introduction, six chapters integrating data generated via oral and archival historical research, semi-structured interviews, a census, participant-observation, and five "Maasai Portraits," short, life-historical vignettes based on the author's extensive ethnographic work in the Embpong, Mti Moja, and Emairete communities. The chapters, conclusion, and epilogue are further organized and integrated around three principles: gender as a field of interaction, development as a technology of rule, and ethnicity as a category of control.

Chapter 1 addresses how gender structured the so-

cial, political, and economic worlds of pre-colonial-era Maasai. Reading a range of ethnographic and historical archival documents with more recent archaeological and linguistic data as well as with her own oral sources, Hodgson explores the organization of pastoralist production, trade systems, political power, ritual, and space to develop a coherent picture of the meaning of "being Maasai" in the 1890s.[3] The chapter does not simply provide a portrait of Maasai relations, but challenges common presumptions and contemporary discourses about the historic gendering male of Maasai power, production, and pastoralist identity. Hodgson finds (in part through a nuanced, feminist, against-the-grain reading of early German ethnographic sources) that Maasai women played important roles in pastoralist production, functioned as their communities' main traders, participated in political processes, and were "central to the ritual sphere" as mediators between Maasai and their God, En'gai (p. 32). Thus, while gender was a central nexus of "social organization which distinguished categories of persons and structured their roles, rights, and responsibilities," it did not make power the sole provenance of Maasai men during the pre-colonial period (p. 26).

Chapter 2 concentrates on how colonial imaginaries "shaped the practices and policies" of British colonial administration and the meanings of Maasai-ness and the ways in which these imaginaries contributed to the gendered redistribution of power and authority in Maasai communities. The gendering male of "being Maasai," Hodgson argues, originated during the colonial encounter between British and Maasai, and was reinforced through the praxis of Indirect Rule through which colonial authorities "mapped their Victorian gender ideologies on to their understandings of, and interventions in, Maasai life" (p. 67). These ideologies presumed Maasai men to be at the center of a clearly constituted "public sphere" and to exercise political authority in this space (p. 67). Administrative policies and practices informed by British gender norms in turn facilitated the evolution of social, political, and economic realities which excluded Maasai women from spaces and roles through which they had earlier exercised authority.

The binaries–public/domestic, political/private, etc.–built around gender spoke to a colonial project of categorization aiming to organize people socially and spatially into easily administrated entities. Ethnic identity, Hodgson argues, was a key element of colonial control.[4] Under Indirect Rule, "the British strove to consolidate and bound people into distinct categories–'tribes'–and then place these tribes within demarcated, controllable, spaces" (p. 49). The process of categorizing ethnic identities was based both on colonial imagining about Africans and on the exigencies of administration. Imagining Maasai to be a readily identifiable race of nomadic warriors "free from the domesticating concerns of 'modern' man" (p. 49) reinforced the gendering male of Maasai-ness and helped drive colonial practices and polices to "align people, place, and rule" (p. 51). For example, Hodgson addresses how the creation of the Maasai Reserve was cast in terms of reuniting and revitalizing scattered Maasai, but was motivated by the colonial administrationÃs concerns with containing what they saw as the "chaos" created by the "pure pastoralism" of the Maasai (p. 52). She also details how development interventions in the reserve from early water conservation initiatives to later livestock programs were couched in rhetorics of "material well-being" and "social progress," but in fact forwarded the politico-economic agendas of the colonial state (pp. 75-81). In short, this chapter demonstrates how colonial development projects were not altruistic interventions but technologies of rule.

Chapters 3 and 4 further develop this theme, tracing the 1956 Maasai Development Plan (MDP) and development's centrality to the newly independent nation-state. The MDP was a five-year plan whose stated goals were to clear tsetse-infested areas, expand water supplies, and test alternative forms of grazing and fodder production (p. 101). But like earlier development interventions and post-war "modernization" schemes in other British colonies like Kenya, the MDP was "deeply intertwined with colonial imperatives to order, control, and compel" progress and production (p. 121).[5] Hodgson argues that in categorizing the MDP in ethnic terms, the colonial administration reinforced images of "the Maasai" as "backward," thereby justifying broader interventions in their affairs (p. 121). Also discourse and practices surrounding the MDP perpetuated the gendering male of Maasai- ness. By focusing on the "male" pursuits of pastoralism, engaging Maasai males as authority figures, and purposefully excluding women from MDP initiatives, the plan contributed to Maasai women's ever- increasing marginalization (p. 118).

Like their British predecessors, post-colonial authorities deployed development with its "modernist narrative" and "agenda of progress" as the "legitimating project" of the Tanzanian state (p. 148). However, while the colonial state organized development interventions around its imaginings of a "distinct" Maasai identity (and vice versa), Maasai-ness was embarrassing to a post-colonial state aiming to implement the Ujamaa or "familyhood"

brand of socialism (pp. 149-152). Development interventions like the dress code campaign and the collective villagization campaign, Hodgson argues, served both to underscore and to stifle elements of Maasai life that the state categorized as unacceptable difference. Also, the post-independence government focused on Maasai men as political actors, forcing their, at least, nominal membership in TANU by "requiring that all individuals buying or selling cattle (who were almost always men) produce TANU membership cards" (p. 189). Such policies have in effect masculinized citizenship among Maasai while circumscribing women's opportunities and images of themselves as political.

This review has focused on the production of knowledge about Maasai, perhaps at the cost of underrepresenting an important and well-executed theme of the book: how Maasai men and women themselves "came to interpret what it means to be Maasai in different ways" (p. 276). Maasai perspectives crescendo through the text, serving not only to enflesh narratives of development, but to problematize the image of development as "good" or "bad" (p. 275). While the last two chapters of the book are organized around nuanced, ethnographic treatment of contemporary Maasai experiences of development, Hodgson is particularly adroit in earlier chapters at working "memory" to overcome what she terms the "historical amnesia" that leads people to insist "it has always been this way" (p. 9). Overall, Hodgson renders a portrait of development among Maasai that shows "there is no homogeneous Maasai 'woman' or 'man,' rather women and men of different ages, social statuses, and so forth whose interactions, both ideal and real, vary considerably" (p. 39).

Hodgson's meticulous and well-documented ethnographic and historical research make this book a valuable resource for scholars of African pastoralism and for other regional specialists, while its sharp theoretical approaches and creative methodologies render it a worthwhile read for both anthro-historians and women and gender studies specialists.

Notes

[1]. See Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson, eds., *Culture, Power, Place: Explorations in Critical Anthropology* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1997).

[2]. See Hodgson, "Once Intrepid Warriors: Modernity and the Production of Maasai Masculinities," *Ethnology* 38.2 (1999): pp. 121-150; also, "Pastoralism, Patriarchy and History: Changing Gender Relations Among Maasai in Tanganyika," *Journal of African History* 40.1 (1999): pp. 41-65.

[3]. See Thomas Spear and Richard Waller, eds., *Being Maasai: Ethnicity and Identity in East Africa* (London: James Currey Press, 1993).

[4]. See G. H. Mungeam, "Masai and Kikuyu Responses to the Establishment of British Administration in the East Africa Protectorate," *Journal of African History* 11.1 (1970): pp. 127-143.

[5]. See Joanna Lewis, *Empire State-Building: War and Welfare in Kenya, 1925-1952* (Oxford: James Currey Press, 2000).

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