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DYNAMICS OF LOCAL DWELLING CULTURE INTO CITIES A CASE OF NOMADIC MAASAI HUMAN SETTLEMENTS IN TANZANIA

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ABSTRACT

This research investigated dynamics of local dwelling culture into cities with a case study of nomadic movements from rural to urban areas which is a result of shortage of grazing land, prolonged drought, livestock diseases and vigor for urban life. The Maasai nomadic pastoral people, were selected to be a window through which reasons associated with nomadic movement to cities and the changed dwelling cultures were found. Case study research method was employed in five urban centers in the Dar es Salaam city, the largest commercial city in Tanzania. Multiple data collection tools were used including interviews, observations, informal conversation, and literature review. It was found out that a good number of nomadic people are moving to cities to find non-pastoral job employment. Traditional rural pastoralism which aimed at searching for grazing land has been replaced by urban search for urban job employments, dwelling opportunities and gathering places for social interactions. Observed that small scale business places for the urban migrants performs both working and dwelling functions. The study revealed several influencing factors on the dynamics of urban dwelling culture such as changed pastoral life, limited livestock dependency, and adherence to advanced urban communal social life.

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INTRODUCTION

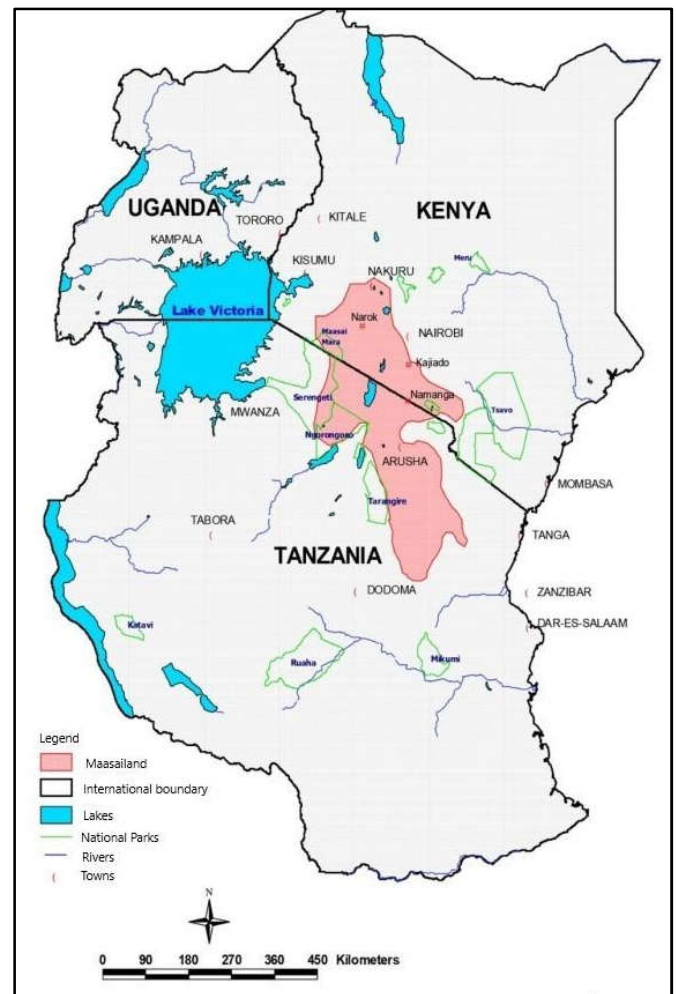
This research explored and addressed a research question: "why nomadic people are increasingly moving from non-urban to urban areas and acquire different dwelling culture in cities"? Dwelling, housing, shelter and habitat are terms which are sometimes used interchangeably to mean the same. This study refers to the first term to present and discuss the research issue. Culture is defined as the societal customs, myth, ideas and values of the people of a particular place. Oliver (1997) describes dwelling as a verb for housing and as a noun for a house. The resultant of dwelling and culture is what is known as dwelling culture (Mosha, 2011a). Furthermore, cultural identity refers to people's sense of belonging to cultural community, and dwelling process of a place. Lefebvre (1991) considers a place as a product of social practices as well as a fundamental cultural product. Kim (2007) indicate that cultural identity is created and preserved through the process of sharing collective knowledge such as dwelling traditions, heritage, language, aesthetics, dressing, norms and customs. Ennaji (2005) defines cultural identity as the feeling of belonging to a community and dwelling place.

It is part of a person's self-conception and is related to nationality, ethnicity, religion, social class, generation, locality or social group that has its own distinct culture. In a complex and multifaceted scenario, an individual can typically affiliate with more than one dwelling cultural group and cultural identity. However, globalization has enabled people to move from their dwelling domicile and find new identities in contemporary places (Madanipour, 2001). This movement has put emphasis on cultural identity, through determining who belongs where. Thus, place of origin becomes an important factor in defining the identity of people (Gupta and Ferguson, 1992). This study reflects on nomadic pastoralists as a case study. Pastoralists do not grow crops but depend on sales or exchange of animal's products to obtain foodstuffs. Their movements provides opportunities to follow greener pastoral resources in a pattern that varies from year to year (Blench, 2001). Various studies attest that this movement has been caused by land shortage, the impact of climate change and death of livestock (Coast, 2002; Munishi, 2013). For instance, in East African nomadic pastoralists are currently confronted with a phenomenal situation of shortage of customary grazing lands, animal diseases and prolonged drought. They are in

constant clash with big land investors. In this scenario, pastoral migrants have lost their livestock rapidly because their customary grazing land has become minimal, thus forcing them to move with their herds to other parts of the country in search of fresh pastoral land and water. In the process, they confront farmers during the nomadic movements because often times their cattle destroy farm lands and planted crops. Herders are therefore forced to move from one place to another for security reasons. In Tanzania for example, the National Wildlife Conservation and ranches have confiscated lot of pastoral land and hence escalated the nomadic movement (Shem, 2010). This scenario has forced most nomadic pastoralists to sell their livestock and leave their customary land to find alternative ways of living in urban areas.

The Case Study of the Maasai: The Maasai are one of good examples of nomadic people in the world particularly in the East African region. It is from this reason that the Maasai are selected to be a case study window to study varying dwelling culture from rural to urban areas. Their tribe is popular due to their long conserved traditional culture. Despite of western culture, formal education and civilization, the Maasai have maintained their traditional way of life, making them a symbol of African culture. Their traditional dwelling culture, dressing style and strategic territory along the game parks in Tanzania and Kenya have made them one of East Africa's most internationally recognized human tourist attractions (May and Ikuyo, 2007). Maasai people reside in both Tanzania and Kenya, living along the border of the two countries (Figure 1). They speak *Maa* language, a Nilotic ethnic language. The Maasai's ancestors originated from North Africa, migrated southwards along the Nile Valley and arrived in Northern Kenya in the middle of the 15th century. They continued southward and conquered all people of other tribes they found on their way, extending through the rift valley and arrived in Tanzania at the end of 19th century. As they migrate, they attacked whoever they found with cattle and raided. By the end of their journey, the Maasai people had taken over almost all Northern Tanzania and Southern Kenya. Despite their migration, they always kept their identity as brave, fierce warriors and livestock headers (Taraiya, 2004).

Traditional Local Maasai Dwelling Compound: A Maasai dwelling compound comprises several semi-permanent houses which are lightly built. The houses are usually small, oval in a shape of bread loaf. This house type is known as *manyatta* as shown on figure 2. The size of a typical *manyatta* house is 2m width by 3m length with curved wall corners and low ceilings. Oliver (1990) contends that indigenous dwellings are not designed by professional architects but by the people themselves. *Manyatta* house construction is done by women using mud, grass, wood and cow-dung sometimes mixed with wood ashes to make it free from termite. These houses are technically built to be temporary structures because the Maasai have to be ready to move at unregulated times because they have to move with their cattle from one grazing land to another in search of greener pastures. On average these houses can last for four years at most. Each married woman builds her own house and becomes in-charge of all required renovations. While women build dwelling houses, men are responsible to build cattle kraals. There is a strong hierarchy in the Maasai community and each individual is respected and responsible on the basis of family profile. Dwelling space is determined and utilized in respect of age, marital status, sex and the affluence of an individual (Masha, 2011b).



Source: Taraiya, 2004

Figure 1. Maasai Territory in East Africa Region



Source: Field Survey, 2018

Figure 2. A Typical Maasai Clan-dwelling Compound showing house units surrounding the cattle kraal

Maasai dwelling compound starts with few house units, and gradually grows in a hierarchical order to surround cattle kraals which are built at the center of the dwelling compound as shown in figure 2. Cattle are the most treasured asset for a Maasai and hence located at the central space strategically to watch against theft. Cattle kraal is a critical determinant space of all other spaces for a Maasai dwelling compound spatial layout. Indigenous knowledge and skills is used to design and construct Maasai houses and dwelling compounds are not designed in accordance to Western design parameters. Hobart

(1997); Rapoport (1970); Parkin and Croll (1992) argues that there is a growth of ignorance to the Western experts failing to appreciate local knowledge and skills in African building designs, human settlements, processes and approaches. The Maasai pastoralists often lack spaces of interaction outside the limits of their homes when they migrate to urban areas. Moulin-Doos (2013) argues that migrant has a characteristic of searching for a new dwelling space. Frank and Augsburg (2009); Massey (1991) describe space appropriation as the process by which human decide to occupy. On one hand, a space can be considered as personal and whenever there is interference by other persons, it is considered inappropriate. On the other hand, just being in a specific place and doing something there, then the space is appropriated by an individual. Space appropriation consists of active and passive spaces. Passive spaces are spaces around us which are uninvited. Whereby inviting everyone in a space can cause discomfort and anxiety to the life of others.

The Maasai Dwelling in the Urban Context: In recent years, a good number of rural pastoral Maasai are moving to cities and relocate themselves in urban villages and establish temporary dwelling compounds (Li, 2013; McDowell and Haan, 1997; Coast, 2006). However, the urban Maasai are confronted with cultural differences and multiple challenges of seeking different set of opportunities without formal education and professional skills to match with city life (Akay and Zimmermann, 2011). Though the Maasai people face many levels of stigmatization and discrimination in cities they are not discouraged and they actively uphold their dwelling cultural identities. Qian and Zhu (2014); Cresswell (2004) have found out the need to understand the way in which dwelling spaces in a certain location reflects something about the cultural identity of any society in creating a network to integrate between urban migrants and the immediate society. Various studies have reported about nomadic pastoral Maasai gentlemen in traditional red garments gathering under tree shades in the middle of the day after working as night watchmen in the city (Coast, 2002; Munishi, (2013); Spear and Waller (1993). Brachet (2005) stated that Maasai migrants create a specific form of territoriality based on their new dwelling places and differences perceived at particular geographical location. Tylee (2011) describes territoriality as a specific form of proxemics that refers to how people use space to interact at their dwelling places. Specific form of territoriality developed by migrants in urban spaces leads to formation of various multiple territories connected with other form of territories at the place of origin. The formation of territorial social structure creates a link and a mode of life interaction among urban migrants. Pearson and Leahy (2007) put forward that dwelling cultural identity depends on continuity, while Ronner and Khan (1977) added that cultural identity allows the people to be what they want to be. Regardless of these studies, there is still insufficient knowledge on how to integrate the dwelling spaces used by urban pastoral migrants with new acquired dwelling culture in cities.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Dar es Salaam city was selected to be a geographical case study area because of its richness of information on the research issue. The nomadic Maasai are selected because of their out-shining unique dwelling culture in cities beyond compare with other ethnicities. Being a descriptive social-

cultural scientific research, case study method was considered to be the most appropriate to deliver reliable findings. Case study research method is good in gathering empirical data from field surveys. It was through this method that it was possible to reach urban Maasai migrant groups and requested them to participate in this research. The sampled urban Maasai migrants were cooperative and they sufficiently explained how their various dwelling cultural undertakings are performed in cities. A total of 56 urban Maasai migrants in Dar es Salaam were interviewed at Bunju, Kawe, Msasani, and Oysterbay urban centers. Selection criteria to who should participate in the study was into two folds. Firstly, migrants should have been in the city for at least six months and secondly was the willingness to be interviewed. 94% of respondents were males and 6% were females. 21% belonged to the age category of 15-25 years; 49% under age category of 26-29 years; 23% under age category of 30-35 years and 7% were above 37 years. Furthermore, 38% of respondents were married and 62% unmarried. 33% of respondents did not have formal education at all; 61% were educated up to primary school level, and 6% had post primary education.

Data collection involved the process of collecting specific information to address the research subject. Informal conversational interviews and participant observations were carried out to collect primary data and literature review was a major source of secondary data. Open ended questionnaires were used to conduct the interviews. Responses from respondents were recorded on a digital sound recorder and was later transcribed and analyzed. Interviews were conducted in both Swahili and *Maa* (Maasai language) languages and finally translated into English language. Since the number of female Maasai is smaller than male urban migrants, the data for this study was collected from fewer women than men. Admittedly, there was gender imbalance of the respondents but it did not distort authenticity of findings due to the research nature which is in favour of male dominance in the nomadic pastoralism. Luckily, the first author of this paper is a Maasai which facilitated to gather accurate information of the detailed dwelling cultural identities of the urban Maasai society. This was an added advantage to ask random but relevant questions based on dwelling culture, behavior and myth in local Maasai language (*maa*). Through observation, it was possible to establish temporariness and permanence of urban dwelling spaces and ways of life. The information observed was used to refine the questionnaire for the next day's interview. Secondary data collection went hand in hand with primary data collection involving documentary review and interpretation. Saunders et al (2009) confirms that a documentary review is good in collecting secondary data.

RESULTS

Pastoral Maasai migrants have been in serious predicament especially when searching livestock grazing land. Consequently, there is a rapid movement to urban areas with cultural differences. Although reasons for these movements are numerous, those related to shortage of grazing lands and prolonged drought are the most prominent. Table 1 illustrates that about 32.96% of the Maasai in the study area identified the shortage of grazing land as the main reason for migration. Prolonged drought was described as the second ranked reason for movement by 23.48% of the respondents. An average of 22.72% of the respondents attested that they decided to migrate due to the breakout of animal diseases that killed most

of their livestock. 20.84% of respondents migrated to seek modern life in cities. Confronted with no place to dwell in urban centres, the urban Maasai migrants have established their own micro-economic activities in the cities that would sustain their living. The research has found out that nearly all nomadic pastoral Maasai migrants who went to Dar es Salaam city hoped to be employed as security guards. One respondent said “*We were forced to move from our rural settlements to urban areas to find employment because keeping livestock today is very difficult due to the shortage of grazing land*” but at the same time to secure employment in cities is even more difficult!

respondents found not owning private dwelling spaces, 14.24% of the respondents attested that traditional pastoral practices are now converted into urban pastoral practices that instead of Maasai moving with livestock to search for pastures they are now moving with traditional products in search of buying customers. This is a new paradigm shift for an urban Maasai pastoral life as vividly observed at Kawe, Msasani, Bunju and Oysterbay urban centres. Although their dwelling culture has largely transformed into urban non-pastoral life, there is a small percentage amounting to 2.08% who demonstrated that they have not changed their cultural dwelling practices.

Table 1. Reasons of Migrating from Traditional Local Maasailand to Cities

Reason	Selected Urban Centres in Dar es Salaam					
	Bunju	Kawe	Mwenge	Msasani	Oysterbay	Average
Shortage of grazing land	33.6	30.3	31.3	33	36.6	32.96
Loss of livestock due to diseases	21.1	33	17.1	18.7	23.7	22.72
Search for modern life	19.3	17.3	30	26.3	11.3	20.84
Prolonged drought	26	19.4	21.6	22	28.4	23.48
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: Field Survey, 2018

Table 2. Reasons of Choosing Dwelling Place in Cities

Reason for Selection	Selected Urban Centres in Dar es Salaam					
	Bunju	Kawe	Mwenge	Msasani	Oysterbay	Average
Place with fellow Maasai	33.2	24.1	16.8	27.2	7.7	21.8
Public Open Spaces	16.3	15.6	18.2	17.3	28.4	19.16
Place with job possibility	22.4	24.0	22.4	23.1	41.6	26.7
Place close to working place	28.1	36.3	42.6	32.4	22.3	32.34
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: Field Survey, 2018

Table 3. Urban Maasai Changed Dwelling Culture

Aspect	Selected Urban Centres in Dar es Salaam					
	Bunju	Kawe	Mwenge	Msasani	Oysterbay	Average
Not Changed Cultural dwelling Practices	1.3	0.7	7.6	0.5	0.3	2.08
Not Dependent in livestock	37.3	43.6	53.6	32.1	57.5	44.82
Not Owning private dwelling Place	21.5	16.4	24.3	11.3	7.1	16.12
Changed communal social life	5.4	23.1	0.8	5.9	3.9	7.78
Changed Pastoral Life	16.2	13.1	10.7	18.8	12.4	14.24
Changed dwelling place and life style	6.4	0.4	0.6	14.6	11.7	6.74
Use of working place as dwelling place	11.9	2.7	2.4	16.8	7.1	8.22
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: Field Survey, 2018

Establishment of Maasai Dwelling Place in Cities: Nomadic pastoral Maasai’s choice to a particular dwelling place in urban setting is linked with several factors. Table 2 illustrates reasons for the urban Maasai migrants’ choice to a particular dwelling place in the urban areas. 32.34% of respondents demonstrated that they preferred dwelling at a place close to their working place as the main criteria. This criteria was followed by possibility of job opportunities (26.7%). Easy place one can find the member of the Maasai community scored 21.8% and occupying public open spaces scored 19.16. It was found out that urban pastoral Maasai solely depended on working as a security guard and as tradesman of traditional Maasai products. This lifestyle has resulted into establishment of temporary dwelling places for the Maasai to gather during the day and in some cases during the night.

Changed Dwelling Culture for the Urban Maasai: On average 44.82 percent of the respondents (table 3) argued that depending on livestock keeping for livelihood has completely changed and they are forced to seek for alternative source of income in urban areas. Their way of life is confronted with various changes including to own private dwelling place, whereby 16.12% of

Urban Maasai Livelihood and Shelter: While interviewing 56 migrants in order to know where they live, the results showed that 44% of urban migrants sleeps at their workplace, 30% sleeps at public open places, while 21% were dwelling in abandoned buildings. Only 5% of urban Maasai migrants acknowledged living in private rental rooms, which are usually in bad dwelling conditions without basic services such as electricity, water and sanitation. During the conversation many of them admitted sharing rental accommodation with fellow Maasai migrants. Expressing the sorrow and hardships which they face, one Maasai migrant shared his feelings as follows:

“You know, we are suffering because we simply don’t have good jobs that can offer us enough money to rent a decent house or a room. The luck Maasai migrant have rented this room and he shares with fellow migrants during rainy seasons, but when there is no rain we are happy to sleep under the trees”

DISCUSSION

Urban Maasai's life in cities have transformed and forced them to engage in other non-pastoral economic activities to sustain a living. It has been a challenge to live in the urban-multicultural destinations with no formal skills and or education in searching for employment and accommodation. They further experienced oppression, exploitation, arbitrary job termination, social stigma and segregation. Their traditional pastoral life of searching customary grazing land is turned into searching for urban jobs, notwithstanding their only dependable job as night watchmen is currently being taken over by formal private security companies with more sophisticated security tools and technology. This situation has forced these pastoral migrants to be jobless in cities. However, they are able to start small business undertakings including traditional hair braiding and selling of traditional medicine in un-utilized urban spaces. These practices necessitated establishment of informal dwelling places for social interactions in urban spaces. They are able to organize private places for domestic, economic and ritual uses. In the past, the Maasai used to dress animal skins, but nowadays skin dresses are used during ritual ceremonies such as marriage occasions and cultural events related to maturity such as circumcisions and reception of dowries in cities. Both rural and urban Maasai put on their own distinctive dressings and beads to be easily identified.



Figure 5. The Meaning behind the Maasai use of color

Maasai dressing distinguishes and expresses their cultural values and identity by wearing their unique Maasai clothings wherever they go. Maasai's dress denotes their cultural identity and also serves as identity towards securing urban jobs. This traditional dress is usually spruced up with a sword firmly attached to the waistband and clutched stick on their hands. Their traditional hairstyle compliments their outlook. One respondent presented himself as follows: "We don't wear normal dresses in urban areas because Maasai colleagues will assume that we have abandoned our cultural values and followed other people's cultural identities". Urban Maasai traditional dressing code, medicine and dancing practices (Figure 6) are maintained and remains the same as those of rural traditions. Maintaining these practices, the urban Maasai have managed to afford living in the city and can relocate themselves somewhere of their preference to dwell and work (Figures 7 & 8).



Source: Field Survey, 2018

Figure 3. Maasai Dressing, Illkarash

Typical Maasai dress known as *illkarash* depicted in figure 3 consists of a red cloth piece, mixed with other colors, wrapped around the body and hanging beaded jewelry placed around their necks and arms as shown in figure 4. These are worn by both men and women and may vary in color. Generally, Maasai prefers specific colors ranging from red, black, yellow, blue to green. Every color has a meaning as described in the Figure 5.



Source: Field Surveys, 2018

Figure 6. Showing Maasai traditional dancing at Mercedes benz festival in Dar es salaam



Source: Fieldwork 2018

Figure 4. Maasai beadwork adorned with different colors and patterns



Source: Field Surveys, 2018

Figure 7. Example of Urban Maasai Business Places



Source: Field Surveys, 2018

Figure 8. Maasai Migrants Discussing Business at their Working Places

Conclusion

This study have established that the urban Maasai migrants are confronted with several challenges to dwell and work in cities but yet they manage to fit themselves into the modern urban life. However, they are facing several difficulties to acquire decent dwellings and job security. The urban Maasai migrant ends up establishing temporary living environment which include dwelling under the trees or in abandoned buildings. Urban Maasai have direct connection to their homeland for mutual support at the two extreme ends. Increased utilization of social groups has created networks to all urban Maasai migrants in cities. Their informal communal gathering places which are also their homes have enabled Maasai community members to speak-out their social and economic challenges to their specific networks and collective solutions are found. During the rainy season it is impossible for urban Maasai migrants to dwell under open shelters, hence, their social groups comes together to rescue during hazardous situations. They temporarily hire a modest residential house or a room, though not of good condition, to accommodate affected Maasai community members. The urban Maasai migrants continue to wear their traditional clothing and perform their traditional dances which attract tourists and other city dwellers to enjoy. Strategically, the Maasai men takes the opportunity of these huge crowds during dancing to enrich their small businesses to earn a living. This includes selling traditional Maasai medicines, leather sandals and hair braiding.

These dwelling cultural practices uniquely distinguish urban Maasai migrant from non-urban Maasai people (*ormeeki*). The urban Maasai migrants have managed to keep their cultural identities in cities and establish defined “*Maasai dwelling nodes*”. Conventional urban planning concepts do not consider places for particular ethnical groups but this research has found a different reality on the ground that nomadic urban Maasai migrants are uniquely dwelling at their own defined places to the extent of branding and naming by their ethnic addresses such as “*Maasai dwelling places*” and conduct micro-businesses to support their life. Urban planners, Architects Sociologists and Policy makers are urged to reflect, research and act upon this dwelling reality on the ground in a more accommodative approach to enhance city life to all.

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