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TRANSNATIONAL ADVOCACY AND THE INDIGENOUS RIGHTS MOVEMENT IN AFRICA: CHALLENGES TO SOVEREIGNTY AND CITIZENSHIP

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Dear members of the Agrarian Studies seminar:

This paper is based on my new project, “Being Maasai, Becoming Indigenous: Transnational Advocacy and the Cultural Politics of Representation, Recognition, Resources and Rights.” As such, the paper is very much a work in progress, so I look forward to your comments, critiques and suggestions. It draws, in part, from two articles published in *American Anthropologist*, but extends the analytic frame to consider new issues (citizenship and sovereignty) and data. Research for the project is ongoing, with a planned year of research in Tanzania in 2005-6, additional work at the UN meetings, and interviews with various representatives from certain donor, advocacy and activist groups yet to be done.

With best wishes,

Dorothy

With the recent emergence of the transnational indigenous rights movement in Africa and Asia, many anthropologists like myself have watched the people with whom we have worked for years reframe their long-term collective identities based on criteria such as ethnicity or livelihood to embrace a new identity as "indigenous" (e.g., Brosius 1999a; Hodgson 2001; Jackson 1995; Li 2000; Turner 1991). Like other contemporary identity-based social movements (often called "new social movements"; see Alvarez et al 1998; Edelman 2001; Escobar 1992; Escobar & Alvarez 1992; McAdam et al 1996), the explosion of the indigenous rights movement has been at once a local and global phenomenon, facilitated by an array of transnational connections such as advocacy networks, sympathetic donors, international meetings, the Internet, and the popular media (Brosius 1999b Cultural Survival 1997a, 1997b; Niezen 2003; Keck & Sikkink 1998).

Although the study of the indigenous rights movement has a long history in the Americas (Gray 1997; Ramos 1998; Warren 1998; Warren and Jackson 2002), Australia (Povinelli 1993), and other former settler colonies with long-recognized indigenous peoples, there are few studies of the movement in Africa (but see Cameron 2001; Saugestad 2001; Igoe 2000, 2003, 2004; Sylvain 2002). In Africa, as in Asia, the contemporary lack of a dominant colonial population converges with long histories of conquest, assimilation, migration, and movement to make the criteria for deciding who is "indigenous" far murkier (Murumbi 1994; Veber et al 1993; Kouevi 2000; Wæhle 1990; cf. Kingsbury 1998). Given the challenges of being recognized as "indigenous" by African nation-states, how and why have some historically marginalized people in Africa decided to become "indigenous"? How have these claims to indigenous identity, both in concept and practice, played out in the context of economic liberalization, transnational capitalism, political democratization, and renewed donor investments and interest in the development of “civil society”? How have “local” indigenous groups engaged transnational discourses, media, organizations, alliances, and each other to articulate and advance their agendas? What have been the achievements, challenges, and costs of using the category of indigenous as a platform for localized economic and political action? Although the concept entails a particular cultural and ethnic politics, what kinds of gender and class politics does it not only entail but produce? How and why have the spatial, social, cultural and political dynamics of the movement changed over time? Finally, how has the involvement of African activists reshaped the practices and politics of the transnational indigenous rights movement?

My new research project addresses these questions through a case study of the historical and contemporary dynamics of the involvement of Maasai from Tanzania with the indigenous rights movement. Specifically, it examines the complex, overlapping politics of representation involved as some Maasai, through the creation of NGOs, position themselves to engage with transnational networks, international donors and multinational organizations such as the UN to seek recognition and rights from the Tanzanian nation-state. It traces the history of the emergence of the term “indigenous” in Maasai discourses; how the concept is imagined, understood, and used by Maasai activists and communities; and the opportunities and obstacles it poses for their ongoing struggles for recognition, resources and rights. The project is based, in part, on almost 20 years of ethnographic and historical research on the cultural politics of development among Maasai, including, most recently, interviews with Maasai activists and community members; reviews of NGO documents, correspondence, publications and reports; participant observation of their activities, meetings, and workshops; and interviews with members of relevant donor and advocacy organizations.

In this paper, I focus on one set of questions raised by the project: how has the engagement of indigenous activists from Africa with the transnational indigenous rights movement challenged ideas and practices of state sovereignty and national citizenship, at a time when nation-states in Africa, as elsewhere, are being radically transformed by neoliberal political, economic and social practices? How has the increasing recognition given to Maasai, Kung San, Batwa, and other indigenous African groups by the United Nations and other transnational institutions reshaped their relationships with their nation-states? How has the proliferation of identity-based NGOs in Africa, with their claims to rights as citizens premised on their cultural difference, restructured the contours of the relationship between historically marginalized citizens and their states, and thus the meanings and practices of citizenship? How has the concomitant expansion of the interest and influence of transnational institutions in state affairs challenged prevalent notions of state sovereignty? These questions inform, challenge, and complicate ongoing theoretical and political debates about the struggles of transnational social movements, the meaning of civil society, and the relationship between cultural difference and citizenship.

Global Claims, Local Realities

On August 3rd, 1989, Moringe ole Parkipuny, long-time Maasai activist, former member of the Tanzanian Parliament, and recent founder of a Maasai NGO, addressed the sixth session of the United Nations Working Group on Indigenous Populations (WGIP) in Geneva, Switzerland:

> Madam Chairperson, fellow representatives and friends in the struggles of indigenous peoples rights, first, I convey from Africa the message of unity and resolute determination to consolidate the strive for our common course. I have learnt that this is the first time that representatives of any community in Africa have been able to attend this very important forum. This is a historic moment for us. We are only two in

> attendance, both from Tanzania, of the Hadza and Maasai communities (Parkipuny 1989).

After thanking the organizations that paid for his trip (the United Nations Voluntary Fund and an NGO called the Human Rights Fund for Indigenous Peoples), he described in vivid terms the contemporary situation in Africa: "The environment for human rights in Africa is severely polluted by the ramifications of colonialism and neo-colonial social and economic relationships in which we are compelled to pursue our development and our sovereignty in a global system replete with injustices and exploitation." He noted that most African countries had achieved political independence only relatively recently; the difficulties of overcoming colonial legacies of unequal rights, resources, and access to political power; and the "might of Western economic hegemony." But, he warned, the intense efforts by many African nation-states to build national solidarity through the production of national identities "have thrown wide open the floor for prejudices against the fundamental rights and social values of those peoples with cultures that are distinctly different from those of the mainstream national population. Such prejudices have crystallized in many African countries into blatant cultural intolerance, domination and persistent violations of the fundamental rights of minorities." He continued:

> In East Africa there are two main categories of vulnerable minority peoples who have been in consequence subjected to flagrant violations of community and individual rights. These are hunter and gatherers, namely the Hadza, Dorobo and Sandawe together with many ethnic groups who are pastoralists. The Maasai of Kenya and Tanzania are the largest and most widely known of the many pastoral peoples of East Africa. These minorities suffer from common problems which characterize the plight of indigenous peoples throughout the world. The most fundamental rights to maintain our specific cultural identity and the land that constitutes the foundation of our existence as a people are not respected by the state and fellow citizens who belong to the mainstream population. In our societies the land and natural resources are the means of livelihood, the media of cultural and spiritual integrity for the entire community as opposed to individual appropriation.
>
> The process of alienation of our land and its resources was launched by European colonial authorities at the beginning of this century and has been carried on, to date, after the attainment of national independence. Our cultures and way of life are

> viewed as outmoded, inimical to national pride and a hindrance to progress. What is more, access to education and other basic services are minimal relative to the mainstream of the population of the countries to which we are citizens in common with other people.

After a few more sentences, he concluded: “With the greatest respect to Mother Earth, the cradle of all life, I salute you all. Thank you very much for your time and attention.”

As Parkipuny claimed, this speech did indeed mark a historic moment in local, national and international affairs; it was the first public assertion by a Maasai leader that Maasai, and indeed, certain other historically marginalized groups in Africa, were part of the transnational community of indigenous peoples. Moreover, the forum for this pronouncement, the sixth session of the United Nations Working Group on Indigenous Populations (WGIP), indicated a new willingness of that body to entertain claims that African groups like Maasai shared common histories, grievances and structural positions within their nation-states with long-recognized “first peoples” from white settler colonies in the Americas, New Zealand, Australia and elsewhere. As such, long-accepted definitions of “indigenous” were being challenged, with pressure to expand their meanings to encompass new categories of similarly disenfranchised peoples.[1]

It is still unclear exactly when and how certain Maasai leaders like Parkipuny began to rethink and reframe the Maasai situation in the terms of the indigenous rights movement – this is a history I have yet to explore fully.[2] Nonetheless, by 1989, several Maasai leaders found the logic and possibilities of linking their struggles with those of the transnational indigenous rights movement compelling. Shortly before his trip to Geneva, Parkipuny and seven other Maasai men had founded one of the first Maasai NGOs, called KIPOC, which is an acronym for “Korongoro Integrated People Oriented to Conservation,” that also means “we shall recover” in Maa. Although KIPOC’s formal constitution (KIPOC 1990), which was submitted for review to the Tanzanian Ministry of Home Affairs as a requirement for formal registration, made no mention anywhere of the term “indigenous,” the word appeared 38 times in the initial 22 page project document written to publicize KIPOC's program and funding needs to international donors (KIPOC 1991). The project document echoed and elaborated many of the themes raised in Parkipuny’s address to the WGIP; it was full of the language and logic of the sanctity of the "cultural identity" of "indigenous" peoples, and their "basic human rights" to choose the form, content and pace of changes in their lives. Moreover, the authors explicitly linked their situation to certain global agendas:

> [t]he realization that African indigenous minorities are an integral part of the worldwide extended family of indigenous peoples...who despite their far apart concrete socio-ecological environments have maintained their ages old community value systems and coherent views on the universe totality in a very perverse world power configuration dominated by the cult of reckless conquest. (KIPOC 1991:6-7)

The Maasai struggle, therefore, was "part of the global struggle of indigenous peoples to restore respect to their rights, cultural identity and to the land of their birth" (KIPOC 1991:7).

These early claims were quickly supported by several transnational advocacy organizations, especially the International Working Group on Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA) based in Copenhagen and the International Institute for Environment and Development in London (IIED). Espen Wæhle (1990) argued for the applicability of the concept to certain African groups in the annual IWGIA report, and then co-organized an international “Conference on Indigenous Peoples in Africa” in 1993, co-sponsored by IWGIA (Veber et al 1993). Meanwhile, IIED was helping Barabaig and Maasai pastoralists in Tanzania organize to protect their land claims. They co-sponsored a 1993 workshop in Tanzania attended by representatives from nine pastoralist groups (including two from Kenya). Among other conclusions, the workshop participants agreed that “indigenous rights” should be emphasized, “in accordance with the UN Resolution designating 1993 as the year of indigenous peoples”

(Bulengo and Sheffer 1993:11). Other workshops, international meetings, and donor interest and resources soon followed (e.g. Bradbury et al 1995).

By reframing their long-standing demands and grievances against the Tanzanian state in the language of indigenous rights, Maasai NGOs like KIPOC turned the cultural politics of their treatment by the colonial and postcolonial states on its head. In the past, colonial and postcolonial administrators used essentialist stereotypes of Maasai as culturally (and even, at times, racially) distinct, inferior, backward, and primitive to justify a range of interventions in their lives: to preserve their "culture" (as in the formation of the Masai Reserve in 1922), to force them to modernize rapidly (as in the Masai Development Project of the 1950s), to alienate and redistribute their territory to more economically "productive" people and enterprises, and to promote Maasai as icons of "traditional" "primitive" Africa in order to promote the increasingly lucrative tourist industry (Hodgson 2001). Rather than continue to challenge these images, Maasai NGOs like KIPOC have appropriated and reconfigured these fixed, ahistorical images in order to appeal to global indigenous rights advocates and initiatives. As KIPOC (1991) argued in their project document, the dominant "national culture" conceives the "modern Tanzanian" to be a Kiswahili speaker and either an active farmer or of "peasant origin." In contrast, the few "indigenous minority nationalities" in Tanzania are defined by KIPOC as either pastoralists or hunter-gatherers, who have "maintained the fabric of their culture": "They are conspicuously distinct from the rest of the population in dress, language, transhumance systems of resource utilization and relationship to the environment. Pastoral and hunter-gatherer peoples persevered, through passive resistance, to hold on to their indigenous lifestyles, traditions and cultures" (KIPOC 1991:5). Although stigmatized by the dominant culture as "static, rigid [and] hostile to cultural interaction and exchange," these indigenous cultures have in fact never been "irrationally opposed to economic development nor uncomprising in dealing with external interests and forces." In reality, these people have been "left out of the development process," especially in terms of the allocation of resources to social services and economic infrastructure (KIPOC 1991:5-6). The project documents and brochures of other Maasai NGOs echoed this rhetoric of culture, power, citizenship and rights.

Maasai claims to be part of the indigenous rights movement have, as a result, transformed their political landscape. Since the formation of KIPOC, and Parkipuny's historic address to the WGIP, over one hundred non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have emerged in predominantly Maasai areas in northern Tanzania, organized around diverse claims of a common "indigenous" identity based on ethnicity (such as "being Maasai"), mode of production (being a pastoralist or hunter-gatherer) and/or a long history of political and economic disenfranchisement by first the colonial and now the postcolonial nation-state. Moreover, these Maasai activists and NGOs have tried, with mixed success, to link with each other and with other groups on the continent to form a series of national, regional, and continent-wide networks. Within Tanzania, there is the Pastoralist Indigenous Non-Governmental Organisation (PINGOs), Tanzania Pastoralists and Hunters and Gatherers Organization (TAPHGO), and the Pastoralist Network (PANET) and within East Africa there is the Maa Council. The broader pan-African networks include the Indigenous Peoples of Africa Coordinating Committee (IPACC), Indigenous Peoples of Africa (OIPA), and the African Indigenous Women's Organisation (AIWO). These pan-African networks have been formed to pressure African states to recognize the presence and rights of indigenous peoples within their borders, to support and coordinate the activities of African NGOs within the UN process, and, more specifically, to promote the United Nations Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (United Nations 1994; see Hodgson 2002a more generally). Many have also been active promoting the agendas of indigenous peoples within the Africa Commission on Human and People's Rights.

The rapid proliferation of NGOs in Tanzania and elsewhere in Africa has emerged in the context of several major shifts in national and international political and economic policies -- "democratization," "economic liberalization," and "decentralization." These shifts have created new opportunities, new constraints and what I call "structural predicaments" for these groups (Hodgson 2002b). Democratization, that is the transition from single-party rule to multi-party politics, has, in its efforts to "strengthen" civil society, created the space for grassroots organizing and thus the formation of pastoralist and indigenous NGOs (Neumann 1995). Under the impact of structural adjustment programs, economic liberalization has encouraged the privatization of key industries, state disinvestments from social services such as education and health, and investment by international capital. One result has been to intensify economic inequalities and political discontent among already marginalized peoples. For pastoralists and hunter-gatherers in Tanzania who already consider themselves "second-class citizens," one of the most alarming effects of liberalization has been the tremendous acceleration of illegal and quasi-legal incursions on to and alienation of their lands for large-scale commercial farms, mining, game parks and wildlife reserves to attract tourists (tourism is a key component of the state's economic development plans), and other revenue-generating endeavors by the state, elites, and international capital (Hodgson 2001, Hodgson & Schroeder 2002, Lane 1996, Madzen 2000). The related process of decentralization involves the "reform" of centralized state planning to shift political control and economic resources from the level of the state to the subsidiary units of the district and village, and promote "the village" as the key unit of development. Decentralization has encouraged "local" control, but hampered organizing or implementing programs -- whether by the government or NGOs -- across these units. These three processes have been deeply contradictory for pastoralist and indigenous people in Tanzania and elsewhere; simultaneously opening the political space for their mobilization through the formation of NGOs, shrinking the economic space on which their livelihoods depend by alienating their lands, encouraging "local" control and decision-making over the development process, and frustrating efforts to mobilize and coordinate translocal initiatives.

Finally, there have also been radical changes in the priorities and practices of multilateral institutions and other development donors. In recent years, most have shifted resources away from nation-states in favor of "local" NGOs and community-based organizations that are presumed to be more effective in reaching the "grassroots" (Bebbington & Riddell 1997; Edwards and Hulme 1992, 1995; Fowler 1995). Moreover, indigenous NGOs in Africa and elsewhere seem to have captivated the special attention of donors, whether because of the historical guilt of some donors over their country's colonial history; the exotic, if temporary media appeal of indigenous activists; or the complex and often contradictory overlap of indigenous rights and environmental agendas. Whatever their allure, the tremendous expansion of donor resources available to NGOs, especially those identified with indigenous causes, in the interests of "strengthening civil society" has facilitated the growth of the movement, but also increased its dependence on donor aid and thus, vulnerability to donor demands and agendas (Bratton 1989).[3]

The Politics of Representation, Recognition, Resources and Rights

So what has been the appeal to Parkipuny and other Maasai activists of linking their agendas and organizations to the transnational network and discourses of "indigenous rights"? Moreover, almost fifteen years after Parkipuny addressed the UN, at the close of the UN

Decade for Indigenous Peoples (1995-2004), what have been the effects of these transnational linkages in terms of advancing Maasai political and economic struggles within the Tanzanian nation-state?

I find it most useful to address these questions in terms of exploring the relationships between the politics of representation, recognition, rights and resources. Recent work on representation has moved beyond debates about authenticity, essentialism and social constructionism to examine the historical, social, political, and economic contexts shaping how and why indigenous groups decide to project and promote particular images of themselves.[4]

As Tania Li argues:

> A group's self-identification as tribal or indigenous is not natural or inevitable, but neither is it simply invented, adopted or imposed. It is rather a *positioning* which draws upon historically sedimented practices, landscapes and repertoires of meaning, and emerges through particular patterns of engagement and struggle. The conjunctures at which (some) people come to identify themselves as indigenous, realigning the ways they connect to the nation, the government and their own, unique tribal place, are the contingent products of agency and the cultural and political work of articulation. (Li 2000:151)

Moreover, this positioning takes place within complex, potent, shifting fields of power, including not just the nation-state, but international NGOs, the United Nations, and transnational advocacy networks. As such, a historical understanding of how such representation and positionings have been constrained and enabled by colonial legacies, capitalist incursions, "development" interventions, and other modernist discourses, practices, and institutions is central.

Such representations, or positionings, are central to seeking and gaining political recognition by their respective nation-states as "indigenous peoples" (cf. Taylor 1994). As Li (2001:652), invoking Johannes Fabian, elaborates, recognition is at once an "act of cognition," an “act of memory” and an “act of acknowledgement.” Demanding such recognition involves learning the relevant legal and bureaucratic categories and processes, lobbying at various levels and sites of government, appealing to the popular media, seeking international support, and molding their images, identities and agendas accordingly: “Those who demand that their rights be acknowledged must fill the places of recognition that others provide, using dominant languages and demanding a voice in bureaucratic and other power-saturated encounters, even as they seek to stretch, reshape, or even invert the meanings implied” (Li 2001:653).

Moreover, the politics of recognition is closely tied to the politics of political representation:

> of who represents and speaks for whom, in particular how far minorities are entitled to be represented by themselves....[R]ecognition and representation go hand in hand; claims and struggles over one carry forward with those of the other; and both effect and are effected, in turn, by the most familiar politics of all, the redistributive politics of who gets what benefits and resources from whom, and perhaps most importantly in...democracies,...from the agencies of the state. (Werbner 2002:119)

Of course the paradox is that indigenous groups must demand recognition from the very nation-states that have historically treated them as second-class citizens (if citizens at all) by ignoring their rights, exploiting their resources, and disparaging their cultures and identities (cf. Li 2001:653; Ramos 1998; Saugestad 2001).

But gaining such recognition is the first step toward demanding rights and protecting resources. A key impetus for the emergence of indigenous activism on its current scale has been, as in the Maasai case, the sustained threats to indigenous land, territories and resources by colonial and post-colonial state interventions, capitalist industry, and other incursions. The brutal and sometimes quite violent abuse of the rights (including the human rights) of indigenous peoples by corrupt and greedy states and industry is well-documented -- Ken Saro-Wiwa, Shell Oil and the Ogoni conflict in Nigeria serving perhaps as a recent, ghastly and ongoing reminder (see, e.g. Watts 2000). Moreover, indigenous peoples have suffered greatly *because* of certain environmental interventions in the name of conservation and tourism: they have been forcibly relocated to make room for game parks and buffer zones, prohibited from accessing and using customary resources to protect forest reserves, and so forth (Brosius 1997, 1999; Zerner 2000; Hodgson 2001).

Finally, many indigenous groups are demanding rights that extend beyond their territorial resources. These demands hinge on the right to self-determination and include the right to determine their own development and to control and protect their cultural knowledge and performances, material remains, languages, indigenous knowledge, and biogenetic material. Development, as much recent scholarship makes clear, is an ambiguous term used to justify an array of interventions and agendas (Hodgson 2001; Escobar 1995; Ferguson 1990). Indigenous peoples often hold alternative ideas about their "development," visions of progress and prosperity that may clash with the dominant modernization and economic productivity paradigms of most nation-states and international donors.⑤ Moreover, the pursuit of their ideals and goals is predicated not just on protecting their territories and resource base, but on controlling the education and socialization of their children, improving their health and social welfare, ensuring the continuity of their languages, and protecting and maintaining their cultural knowledge and institutions. The issue of legal protection of and economic compensation for the collection, appropriation or use of their intellectual property -- whether cultural knowledge, material remains, or biogenetic resources -- is the subject of lively and contentious international debate.⑥ Fortunately, the emergence of transnational indigenous rights coalitions and networks has enabled indigenous peoples to better assert and lobby for their own interests and demands in these deliberations.

Challenging the State

So, given these interlocking struggles over representation, recognition, resources and rights, have Maasai been successful in positioning themselves so as to establish international recognition and support for their demands? If so, how has the inclusion of transnational institutions and interests in their struggles changed the relationship of Maasai with the Tanzania nation-state? What do these new cultural and political dynamics entail for the meanings and practices of sovereignty and citizenship in Tanzania?

Maasai have been remarkably successful in establishing themselves as key players in the transnational indigenous rights movement. Maasai activists from Tanzania and Kenya regularly attend the annual meetings of the WGIP and PFII; have built sustained ties with advocacy organizations like the International Working Group on Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA) in Denmark, Survival International in the United Kingdom, and Cultural Survival in the United States; participated in exchange programs with aboriginal activists in Australia and elsewhere; and frequently attend international workshops, conferences and meetings where they meet with other indigenous rights activists to share their experiences, learn new strategies, and build an international coalition.

In 2003 and 2004, between 10 and 15 Maasai delegates from Kenya and Tanzania attended the annual UN Permanent Forum in New York. Even amidst the vivid collage of indigenous costumes, jewelry, and accessories, the Maasai delegates stood out as they strode through the meeting room or down the hallways in their customary dress. Most of the men, almost all educated junior elders, wore bright red tartan cloths, beaded belts, and beaded bracelets everyday. A few wore pants and bright cotton tunic shirts with elaborate beadwork around the neck and arms. The women dressed in an array of outfits, ranging from contemporary renditions of customary dress to skirts and jackets. Several were regular attendees at the UN meetings and well-known to the other indigenous activists from the US, Asia, Latin America and elsewhere. Lucy Mulenkei, for example, a Kenyan Maasai journalist, was editor of the periodical *Nomadic News* (published by the Indigenous Information Network), president of the African Indigenous Women's Caucus, and co-chair of the Indigenous Caucus. Adam ole Mwarabu, an IlParakuyo Maasai from Tanzania, had participated in a six month UN training program for indigenous activists in Geneva, and aggressively networked with other activists, donors and advocates to publicize his grievances against the Tanzanian state and seek financial and logistical support for his NGO. Mary Simat, a long-time Maasai activist from Kenya, was the Deputy Chairperson of the Indigenous Peoples of Africa Coordinating Committee (IPACC), and presented regular statements to the floor in the open sessions.[7] A few Maasai were attending the meetings for the first time. They relied on the experienced activists to introduce them to other delegates, help them formulate and present statements, and navigate the bureaucracy and logistics of the UN meeting. All of the Maasai (and other African activists) whom I met represented NGOs in their home countries. Most quickly proffered business cards and offered to exchange emails, while others circulated flyers, pamphlets, copies of their formal statements, and colorful brochures.

In addition to their leadership roles, the visibility and recognition of Maasai as indigenous people at the UN was clearly marked in several ways. For example, when Henrik Ole Magga, a Member of the Permanent Forum was elected to chair the 2004 Permanent Forum (he had chaired the two previous Forums in 2003 and 2002 as well), he opened the first session by displaying a beaded Maasai *rungu* (carved short stick) to all the delegates. "Since the last Forum," he announced, "I was able to visit East Africa, especially with Maasai. They gave me this beaded *rungu*. I feel I have the inspiration to guide you through the work we have to do." During a trip to Kenya in January 2004, ole Magga visited Maasai communities, met with Maasai activists, and participated in the "Conference to Facilitate Active Participation in the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Peoples" sponsored by IWGIA. The Conference brought indigenous representatives from Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Ethiopia and the Democratic Republic of Congo together for three days to discuss "contemporary issues, Human rights, UNPF, and UN specialized agencies, National/Regional policies that affected indigenous peoples in Eastern African Region" (UN Report E/C.19/2004/CRP.2 22 March 2004, p. 3).

In addition, as part of the daily opening ceremony at the 2004 PFII, in which different indigenous delegates were asked to begin the session with their customary prayers, songs or rituals (as everyone in the room stood silently), a group of Maasai delegates performed a praise song to their deity Eng'ai one morning. At the 2004 UN Working Group in Geneva, Mary Simat was repeatedly called on to sing Maa songs at various receptions, parties and observances. Perhaps more importantly, Maasai delegates actively participated in many of the "Side Events," scheduled workshops, meetings, and discussions that took place during the two hour mid-afternoon break in the plenary session and in the late afternoon and evenings. At the 2004 Permanent Forum, a group of Kenyan Maasai delegates organized a well-attended press briefing to publicize demands that the Kenyan government return their land once the 1904 Anglo-Maasai Treaty expired and their complaints about efforts by the Kenyan government to renew a soda mining lease to foreigners that had created tremendous inequities in access to resources.[8]

Not all the activists find the UN meetings productive however. As one Maasai woman commented to me over coffee at the 2004 Permanent Forum, "I find that nothing real takes place here. It is a waste of time. These people come as representatives, but I wonder who they really represent. Probably just a few people. They come here; say a few words, but what really happens?" Both experienced and first-time delegates expressed deep frustration over the formalistic procedures at the UN, the limited spaces for dialogue, debate and discussion with other activists, and the glacial pace and byzantine processes for instituting changes in international and national policies. As another Maasai activist complained to me in response to a question about her experience at a workshop the night before sponsored by IFAD, WIPO and the ILO; "It was OK. There was lots of writing. I wonder what all that writing accomplishes? There are lots of policies, but what really happens on the ground?"

Despite their frustrations, all of the activists acknowledge that one benefit of their success at gaining substantial international visibility and recognition as an "indigenous people" has been a tremendous flow of resources from international donors. In effect, international recognition has enabled them to circumvent the Tanzanian state to access substantial resources for social and economic development initiatives such as water, education, health services, and livestock restocking. For instance, in addition to sponsoring numerous workshops, training sessions and meetings for NGO leaders, Danida spent almost $5 million on a livestock development project in Ngorongoro, working through the auspices of a Maasai NGO; the African Wildlife Foundation (with funding from USAID) and Cordaid (an Irish donor) have channeled millions of dollars through another Maasai NGO to create Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs) and promote and array of conservation and income-generating activities for men and women; and HIVOS and NOVIB (two Norwegian donors) worked with another Maasai NGO to support water projects, women's income-generating projects, and several land rights claims. Other Maasai NGOs have found donors to build new schools, dispensaries, water projects, roads, shops and more.

As clear from some of these examples, donors have primarily supported the economic demands of Maasai rather than more political concerns like land reform that make direct claims on the state. But Maasai and other marginalized groups have expressed formidable “development” needs and desires. Some activists consider the fulfillment of these needs, especially expanded and improved education, as a prerequisite to expanding their political presence and influence in national politics and decision-making. Others, however, recognize that their dependence on donor funds creates vulnerability to, and pressure to comply with, donor political and economic agendas, including pressure from some donors on NGOs to depoliticize their agendas (Hodgson 2002b; cf. Cameron 2001).[9] The small-scale and large numbers of these NGOs make them even more susceptible to such pressures. Whatever their agenda, many NGOs find themselves forced to respond to donor initiatives rather than seeking funding for programs of their own design. A few seem to have become “local partners” in name only, that is mere proxies for the unmediated implementation of donor agendas. Of course, like NGOs, “the donor community” is no monolithic entity with a common form, function, agenda, or political orientation, and their reasons for supporting certain NGOs may vary tremendously and even conflict. Thus, as described above, one donor supports a Maasai NGO to promote the expansion of Wildlife Management Areas, while another donor finances a Maasai NGO to directly challenge these conservation initiatives.

Not surprisingly, the success of Maasai NGOs in capturing international recognition and donor resources has reshaped their relationships to the Tanzanian government in several ways.[10] First, the government is suspicious of the very terms of their mobilization, especially the unsettling fusion of assertions of cultural difference with demands for collective rights. By organizing around the identity claims of “being indigenous,” premised in part on ethnicity, Maasai NGOs have revitalized ethnic identifications and challenged democratic liberalism’s championing of the individual rights and responsibilities of “citizens” with their claims of collective grievances and rights (cf. Muehlebach 2001, 2003). The government, however, is wary of appearing to endorse "ethnic favoritism" (Anonymous 2000:8), equates political organizing along ethnic lines with "tribalism," and fears that such ethnic mobilization could strengthen political opposition, produce economic and political instability, or even foster violence (see, e.g. Neumann 1995). Few government officials, however, see the irony, even hypocrisy, in their position. They overlook the enduring dismissal and disparagement of Maasai as a collectivity that has, in great part, produced their sense of collective grievances and thus demands for collective redress (Hodgson 2001).

Second, the ability of NGOs to capture significant amounts of donor funds has also, on occasion, sparked the suspicions of the Tanzanian government over perceived challenges to state sovereignty (Hodgson 1999d; Igoe 2000). In the aftermath of colonial rule, some Tanzanian officials are rightly wary of the expanded ability of international donors to set and shape national policies through their support of NGOs. However progressive (or not) they may be, neither the donors nor NGO leaders are elected representatives; they therefore lack the accountability and legitimacy of state actors (cf. Shivji 2003). The structural position of NGOs as "gatekeepers" between donors and local people further complicates these issues of accountability, representation and legitimacy, as NGOs must mediate the sometimes conflicting demands of their donors and members. On the other hand, such concerns on the part of state officials are, of course, more than a little disingenuous, given the dramatic loss (and sometimes sale) of state sovereignty in recent years to international capital, the World Bank, IMF, and other actors and institutions in the name of neoliberal economic and political "reforms."

Third, government concerns over state sovereignty have been aggravated by the inability of government officials to effectively monitor and control NGO activities given the decentralization of political power and economic resources and the sheer number of NGOs. Although the government monitors NGOs through its centralized registration and reporting process, efforts to coordinate NGO and government development initiatives occur primarily at the district (with the district development committee, or specific district offices such as agriculture or water) or village (with the village council) level, hampering efforts for more systematic oversight, planning and coordination.[11] As a result, the Tanzanian government drafted and passed a new NGO Bill in 2002 that substantially increased its power to deny or revoke the registration of NGOs (United Republic of Tanzania 2002). They have also actively intervened into the activities of some Maasai NGOs, including banning the participation of Kenyan Maasai at one conference on Maasai rights in Arusha, refusing to issue passports to some Tanzanian Maasai activists who were scheduled to participate in the UN PFII, and threatening to "deregister" several Maasai NGOs for being "too political."

The involvement of Maasai in the transnational indigenous rights movement has affected not only their relationship with the Tanzanian state, however. Their strategic decisions to link their efforts to transnational discourses and networks of indigenous peoples have introduced a complex cultural politics that has reshaped their relationships among themselves and with other indigenous and non-indigenous groups in Tanzania. Positioning oneself as "indigenous," as comparative evidence suggests, creates both opportunities and risks (see, for example, Conklin and Graham 1995; Jackson 1995; Warren 1998; Saugestad 2001, Sylvain 2002). The positive effects, as mentioned before, include increased visibility, resources and leverage against the state. But mobilizing around the label "indigenous" implies that members share common interests because of their common identity; an assumption that may reflect more rhetoric than reality, given similarities and differences among Maasai, Barabaig, Hadzabe and other groups of language, history, livelihood, visibility, and relationship with the nation-state. In fact, the ongoing and sometimes quite hostile debates over the criteria for inclusion and exclusion in the indigenous rights movement in Tanzania, that is, who is and is not "indigenous," that I have described elsewhere (Hodgson 2002b) are a key reason that the movement is so fragmented. Key issues include debates over whether claims to "being indigenous" should be based on ethnicity, livelihood, or other criteria; power hierarchies among indigenous and especially pastoralist groups; and debates over the meaning and appropriateness of the label indigenous between activists and their supposed constituents (Anonymous 2000, ole Morindat 2000, Sangale 2000).

Moreover, organizing around the label of "indigenous" has consequences for non-indigenous groups. Most communities in northern Tanzania are ethnically mixed, so it means that only certain members of a community -- whether because of their ethnicity or primary livelihood -- are singled out for representation and resources, while the needs of other community members are ignored. In some areas, as Jim Igoe (2000) has documented, the formation of NGOs has catalyzed ethnic tensions over local resources and political control. Moreover, those villages or communities who do not yet have an NGO to represent their interests are unable to contribute to or benefit from the indigenous rights movement. The proliferation of NGOs has, in part, been one response to this issue, as every village or community forms an NGO to seek development funds.

In addition, although the proliferation of NGOs could be interpreted as a sign of the vibrancy and resonance of the transnational indigenous rights movement with Maasai histories and experiences, the large numbers of NGOs, together with the cultural politics and structural predicaments described earlier, have produced dissension and problems within the movement. As I have explored elsewhere (Hodgson 2002b), despite attempts to foster unity, promote common political agendas (such as protection of land rights), and coordinate their activities through innumerable meetings and workshops and the creation of at least two "umbrella" coordinating groups, the indigenous rights movement in Maasai areas has continued to splinter into even more groups and to become fractured by sometimes quite hostile disagreements over priorities, competition over resources, and tensions over membership and representation. Not surprisingly, the failure of NGOS to build a viable coalition has significantly hindered their effectiveness as advocates at the national level. As a result, they have engaged in piecemeal rather than systematic lobbying and sporadic rather than sustained political pressure. Several Maasai activists still bemoan the most recent consequence of their ineffective, fractured coalition – the failure to successfully advocate pastoralist interests (such as collective land titles) in recent national land reform decisions, arguably one of the most important political opportunities and challenges in decades. Some contrast their failure with the striking success of women's organizations in Tanzania, which were able to form an effective political alliance to lobby for certain progressive reforms (such as codifying women's rights to own and inherit land).

A related set of problem concern significant social differences of age, gender and class between NGO leaders and their constituencies, and among constituents themselves (cf. Burdick 1995). For a range of reasons, including literacy and language skills, familiarity with the routines and protocols of workshops and plenary sessions, and a lack of other employment opportunities, NGO leaders are almost all younger, educated men. Yet most of them come from societies such as Maasai that have historically conferred specific rights, responsibilities and powers to men according to their age-set. By assuming the leadership of NGOs, junior men have fostered generational tensions by challenging the customary authority of elder men. After several respected elders publicly accused the junior male organizers of the "First Maasai Conference on Culture and Development" in 1991 (where another Maasai NGO was founded) of disrespect and betrayal, few elder men have participated in the workshops and meetings of Maasai NGOs. Their exclusion from local debates is mirrored at the international level. At the three UN meetings of the PFII and WGIP that I have attended, I met only one elderly Maasai man (from Kenya). He attended the 2003 PFII, where he sat quietly in a back row, seemingly bemused and bewildered by the debates, protocols, and delegates that swirled around him. Since he spoke no English and only minimal Swahili, he relied heavily on his two younger, educated companions for translations, directions, and assistance. Much of his time was spent, in fact, sitting on a bench in the hallway, chatting in Maa with a young woman from his delegation or watching the activities and interactions of other delegates. He was thrilled when I greeted him in Maa, and happily sat down to talk, but it quickly became clear in our conversation that he had very little understanding of the work of the United Nations or the purpose of the meetings. (In fact, he told me that he had accompanied his delegation to the United States to assist them in the "cultural" shows and dances that they performed at interested universities and colleges to raise money for their trip and NGO.)

Similarly, women, young or old, have only recently been included in NGO leadership or consulted in their programming, thereby reinforcing women's ongoing economic and political disenfranchisement (Hodgson 2001, 1999a, 1999b, 1999d, 1999e, 1997). Matters have improved somewhat since the 1991 First Conference on Maasai Culture and Development, where Maasai women were relegated to the outside balcony to sell their beadwork as part of a "Maasai Women's Cultural Exhibit" rather than included in the conference discussions and debates (Hodgson 2001). Most NGOs now have "women's wings" and some include women in leadership positions or on their Board of Directors. A few Maasai Women's NGOs have even been started by educated Maasai women in recent years. The increasingly vocal demands of the indigenous women in the transnational indigenous rights movement have helped to facilitate increased gender sensitivity on the part of donors and strategic gender awareness on the part of most NGOs (see, for example, the special issue of *Indigenous Affairs* 1-2(4) on “Indigenous Women.”). At the 2004 Permanent Forum, the theme was “Indigenous Women,” and women outnumbered men in most indigenous delegations, including some of the Maasai groups. Of course almost all of these women, like their male counterparts, are necessarily educated elites as well – many Maasai women’s activists are in fact the wives of male activists.

These class, gender and generational dynamics have contributed to the struggles of NGOs for legitimacy and accountability in the eyes of the state, donors and their communities. Although few community members understand the rhetoric of “indigenous rights” or have ever heard of the United Nations, many express anger and frustration over the ongoing discrimination, disrespect, and even injustices that they feel at the hand of the Tanzanian state. The recent expulsion of Maasai from the Mkomazi Game Reserve (Brockington 2002), continuing altercations over the presence and practices of Maasai living in the Ngorongoro Conservation Area, and ongoing battles over land in Loliondo allocated by the state to a wealthy hunter from the United Arab Emirates (dubbed “Loliondogate” in the Tanzania press, Hodgson and Schroeder 2002) have only fuelled their anxieties. Few Maasai, therefore, consider themselves “Tanzanian citizens,” but most desire more just treatment by the state and a more equitable distribution of state services. For these reasons, many community members therefore understand and support the political necessity for NGOs in order to access the bounties of “development,” but they remain suspicious about the motivations and agendas of some NGO leaders. Tales of misappropriated resources, sightings of new cars and homes, and the distance of some NGO offices from the communities they claim to serve only fuel these suspicions. Illiterate men and women, in particular, perceive some leaders as elitist and worry about the "power of the pen" to transform their lives (Hodgson 2001, 1999c).

For all of the reasons detailed above -- fear of ethnic revitalization, resistance to the acknowledgement of collective rights, suspicion over donor attention and resources, internal disagreements and differences -- and more, working for and achieving recognition by the Tanzanian nation-state has been and continues to be a grueling, time-consuming, and ongoing challenge. Moreover, the involvement of regional and transnational institutions and activists in these efforts means that the terms of struggle are dynamic and ever-changing. One possible source of change is the recent meetings, declarations, and decisions by the African Commission on Human and People's Rights (ACHPR). In 2000, after intensive lobbying by several indigenous organizations and donors, the ACHPR passed a resolution that called for the establishment of a working group to explore the concept of "indigenous peoples and communities in Africa" and to make recommendations to the ACHPR (ACHPR 2000). In 2001, ACHPR established the "Working Group on the Rights of Indigenous Populations/ Communities in Africa," which submitted its report to the Commission in 2003. Among other recommendations, the report called for the continuation of the Working Group so that it could continue to gather information about "indigenous populations and their communities and organizations," "undertake country visits to study the human rights situation of indigenous populations/communities," and "formulate recommendations and proposals on appropriate measures and activities to prevent and remedy violations of the human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous populations/communities" (ACHPR 2003). The resolution was approved.

Conclusion

The historical conjuncture between the intensified inequalities experienced by marginalized minorities such as Maasai as a result of neoliberal economic interventions; donor fantasies about, and expectations of, the possibilities for NGOs and civil society; and the transnational prominence, appeal and strength of the indigenous rights movement is no coincidence. For Maasai, like other groups, "becoming indigenous" is one of the only politically viable strategies currently available in a time of radical dislocation. By reframing their long-standing grievances and demands against the Tanzanian state in terms of the indigenous rights movement, they have challenged disparaging stereotypes, forged a collective identity, mobilized disparate and often dispirited groups, and gained greater international visibility, legitimacy, and resources. In fact, one could argue that involvement in the transnational indigenous movement has expanded the capacity and resources for some Maasai to participate more actively as "citizens" in national politics and policy-making. But participation in the indigenous rights movement has also introduced a complex cultural politics of inclusion and exclusion that has, I believe, intensified the structural predicaments and political effectiveness of their movement at the national level. In particular, the current pressures faced by the Tanzanian state – crippled by mandated cutbacks in personnel and resources, struggling to understand and implement democratic "reforms" and the tenets of "decentralization" – make it even more wary of recognizing and responding to the collective demands and pressures of indigenous peoples and their organizations. And, finally, the role of donors as brokers and intermediaries with particular, sometimes contradictory, notions of "civil society," "the state," "NGOs," and "indigenous peoples" only further complicates matters. Although the issues and problems raised in this paper are obviously specific to the time, place, and agendas of the indigenous rights movement in northern Tanzania, I believe that they offer insights into some of the predicaments faced by indigenous rights movements everywhere.

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[1] For an overview of the key international legislation and documents defining "indigenous people," see Hodgson (2002a:1038-1040). For more on the WGIP and other UN agencies working on the issue, see van der Fliert 1994, Cobo 1986, IWGIA 1999, López-Reyes 1995, Maiguashca 1994, Muehlebach 2001, Roulet 1999, Stamatopolous 1994, and Tennant 1994. These revisions of the definition and legal framework of indigenous peoples were not without

controversy, but in general international law has been revised to acknowledge and accommodate the claims of these new groups. For insightful overviews and discussions of this controversy, see Saugestad 2000, 2001; Kingsbury 1998; Swepston 1989. For arguments in favor of applying the term "indigenous" to certain African peoples, see Murumbi 1994, Veber et al 1993, Wæhle 1990, Kipuri 2001, Kouevi 2000.

2. One of my interviews suggests that Parkipuny was influenced, in part, by conversations with a member of IWGIA, but I have not yet been able to interview Parkipuny himself to obtain his perspective.

3. See Comaroff and Comaroff 1999 for a critical analysis of historical and contemporary deployments of "civil society" in Africa. The article by Garland (1999) on "Developing Bushmen" is especially relevant to my arguments here.

4. See, for example, Hodgson 2001; Li 2000; Brosius 1999c; Warren 1998; Povinelli 1993; Ramos 1998.

5. For studies of indigenous ideas of "development," see Hodgson 2001; Gray 1997, 1998; Ramos 1998; Blunt and Warren 1996.

6. For an overview of the issues and positions taken by anthropologists and indigenous activists, see Brown 1998; Posey 1990; Cleveland and Murray 1997; Benthall 1993; Brush 1993, 1996; Greaves 1994; Coombe 1993; Tsosie 1997; Orlove and Brush 1996.

7. Mary was recently elected Chairperson of IPACC when the former Chair, Hassan id Belkassm, a Moroccan lawyer and Amazigh activist, was elected a member of the Permanent Forum.

8. These demands were the focus of a peaceful march by Maasai in Nairobi to formally present their demands to the British High Commissioner that led to beatings, gunshots and arrests by Kenyan police on August 24, 2004. In other areas, Maasai who herded their cattle and smallstock on to white settler land were also attacked and ousted by police. See, for example, news coverage by Lacey 2004, Mugo & Guracha 2004, Mbaria 2004. Some online accounts featured pictures of Maasai activists I had met at the UN leading the demonstration, struggling with police, crying, and being arrested.

9. Fisher (1997:454) has described this process as the "co-optation" of NGOs by donors from "empowerment/social mobilization" to "service/delivery/development."

10. Of course, as Michael Bratton (1989:570) has argued, there is always a tension between "the government's urge for order and control and the NGO quest for organizational autonomy." According to Bratton, governments seek to control NGOs through a range of strategies, including monitoring, coordination, cooptation and dissolution, and NGOs in turn have a range of counter-strategies such as maintaining a low profile, selective collaboration with the government, or explicit policy advocacy (Bratton 1989:570). Hulme and Edwards (1997:13) categorize government interventions as either "carrots" (tax exempt status, access to policymakers and public funding) or "sticks" (closure, deregistration, investigation and

coordination).

11. These endeavors are further complicated by the vast differences that can exist among regional and local government agencies, as well as individual officials, as to their attitudes, effectiveness, and practices with regards to NGOs and local communities.