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ATTEMPTS TO DEVELOP THE HADZABE OF TANZANIA¹

by D.K. Ndagala

Development and policy issues in nomadic and pastoral societies have increasingly been attracting the attention of scientists from various disciplines. Moreover, there have been considerable discussions as to why given policies fail in nomadic and pastoral sectors but judging from detailed conference proceedings on pastoral peoples (Galaty, et al 1981) more knowledge is still needed to enable the policy-makers to understand the factors which affect the development of nomadic and pastoral societies.

Although policies are usually general in nature, their implementation need not be generalized because there are always local variations. A move which may be envisaged by the policy-makers as beneficial may prove to be disastrous to certain localities or given occupational groups. For many years nomadic and pastoral societies have been the butt of the policy-makers' accusations. There is still an unfounded belief among most policy-makers and planners that nomadism is opposed to development and that agriculture is the best form of producing a living in rural areas. Nomadic and pastoral societies are thus regarded as less developed and most policies which are made in respect to these societies aim at sedentarizing them and making them agriculturists. And whenever these societies show some resentment, the policy-makers accuse them of primitiveness or of being resistant to change. In Tanzania, the pastoral Maasai have for about a century been the focus of such accusations. (Ndagala 1974, 1981b). The Maasai have managed to survive these moves due mainly to their economic self-reliance relative to their agricultural neighbours.

Although pastoral societies have stolen the limelight whenever development and policy issues are discussed, there are other societies which have for many years fought for their right to survive as nomads in spite of government policy moves which sought to sedentarize them. In this paper I shall discuss development and policy as they relate to the Hadzabe nomadic hunter-gatherers of Tanzania.

The Hadzabe who number less than 3,000 individuals make up a nomadic hunter and gatherer society living in the Rift Valley around Lake Eyasi in northern Tanzania in the Districts of Mbulu, Iramba and Maswa. They are in other literature called Hadza, Tindiga or Kindiga. Although generally left to themselves by the policy-makers due to the hostility of their country, the Hadzabe have from time to time been subjected to several moves to make them sedentary. Nevertheless, these efforts by the colonial and post-colonial governments to 'civilize' these nomads through sedentarization and agriculture have for the past fifty years or so not succeeded.

All the would-be Hadzabe settlements are full of the evidence of 'civilization' such as brick houses with iron roofs, piped water, pipes that were never used and schools that are now used by sedentary cultivators though meant for the hunter-gatherers. The nomads are still in the bush eating wild roots, fruits, honey and wild meat though in relatively smaller quantities than their grandfathers did. Is this adherence to nomadic hunting and gathering by the Hadzabe due to their being

favoured ecologically; is it their resistance against an intruding institution, government; or are they simply avoiding the consequences of sedentarization? I will address myself to these questions in the light of the opportunities and constraints of hunting and gathering in Hadzabe country for the past fifty years.

This paper has three major parts. The first part deals with the various efforts which were taken by government and related agencies in order to develop the Hadzabe. The second part looks at the way in which these hunter-gatherers earn their living in their traditional way. The third part looks at the way in which the concepts of development and policy can be translated in the interest of the Hadzabe themselves and of Tanzania in general.

Attempts to Sedentarize the Hadzabe

The first recorded attempts to settle the Hadzabe were made in 1927 when several of them were brought together in Mbulu District. They were given maize gruel for food. After a few weeks more than ten of these Hadzabe died and the remaining were allowed to go back to the bush. In 1937 a second attempt to settle the Hadzabe was undertaken, but after a few weeks they ran back to the bush (cf. Woodburn 1962). The purpose had been to make them useful members of the colonial state by teaching them to produce cash crops and thereby qualify for taxation. After these attempts to sedentarize them, the Hadzabe were left to themselves. From that time they remained relatively ungoverned by the government and they are the only society which was never taxed by the colonial government.

In 1964 four years after the independence of mainland Tanzania (Tanganyika) the First Five Year Development Plan was launched. It aimed at the improvement of agriculture through the 'transformation approach' (Nyerere 1973:90). The government was to open up and finance settlement schemes of a highly mechanized nature. Among those to be resettled were the Hadzabe hunter-gatherers. There were two considerations in resettling the Hadzabe. It was thought that everybody should be involved in building a ". . . society in which all members have equal rights and equal opportunities; in which all can live at peace with their neighbours without suffering or imposing injustice, being exploited or exploiting and in which all have a gradually increasing basic level of material welfare before any individual lives in luxury" (Nyerere 1968:111). Every citizen had a right to an equitable share of the gross domestic product and had an obligation to contribute to the gross domestic product. It was considered however, that Tanzanians individually or in groups could achieve their rights and obligations through permanent, spatially proximate dwellings.

The first Hadzabe settlement to be established by the post-colonial government was Yaeda Chini in Mbulu District which was established in 1964. These people were to be 'developed' by being taught how to put on the Western type of dress; be introduced to agricultural meals and be introduced to contemporary education as opposed to their traditional education which was transmitted from one generation to another orally and practically. By the end of 1967 a total of 768 Hadzabe had been assembled at Yaeda Chini. The second settlement to be opened up was Munguli in Iramba District which was initiated by Rev. Robert Ward a Lutheran missionary in 1965. Unlike the post-colonial government Rev. Ward had different reasons for establishing a Hadzabe village. It is reported by Kitunga (1973:11) that the missionary was interested in shooting game and that, "It is during his visits in the forests that he happened to meet the Tindiga. . . . He shot game for them and provided them with clothes, metals and other attractive things. Eventually he was able to convince a number of them. He taught them the Bible and converted them to Christianity. . . ."

. . . In order to spread Christianity effectively, he decided to establish a permanent settlement for them." For the priest, the settlement was his duty and a fulfillment of his moral obligation. The third settlement was established at Mang'ola in Mbulu District in 1968. These settlements were strongly backed by the government and were provided with a number of social services. For example, primary schools and dispensaries were established in each settlement, while water installations were made alongside other innovations. The settlers were provided with clothing, food, hoes, various cereal seeds and so on. Moreover, model houses were built by the government in order to provide accommodation to the new settlers and introduce them to the supposedly better houses. In addition beehives, ploughs, milling machines and other amenities were provided to the settlements in order to make life easier for the settlers and gradually encourage them to abandon the nomadic hunting and gathering way of life.

The passing of the Arusha Declaration, Tanzania's blueprint to socialism in 1967 had an impact on the status of the Hadzabe settlements. In 1968, the settlements were declared by the policy-makers to be ujamaa villages, that is, villages in which members lived together and worked together for their common good. All the villages/settlements continued to get government support. The authorities in Maswa District did not get in touch with the Hadzabe until 1973. In 1974 however, 34 Hadzabe households with 200 people were gathered and put into a settlement at Paji. Here again the 'settlers' were provided with food, clothing and Sukuma-type of houses. Tractors were brought in to prepare the fields and cotton was planted as a starter for cash crop production for the new settlement.

There was much enthusiasm among the policy-makers to have the Hadzabe abandon their traditional economy of nomadic hunting and gathering and have them become self-sufficient in food production as agriculturists. Every District allocated relatively large sums of money in the so-called Hadzabe development projects. McDowell (1981b:9) writing on settlement schemes in Mbulu District reports that from 1972 to 1975, ". . . a tremendous amount of money and effort was expended by the District to establish a modern village for the Hadza at Endamaghay. A school, 12 houses, and a dispensary were built and furnished, a maize grinding machine installed and housed, water piped into the village, food aid and game meat transported to the village, clothing and farm utensils, including plough donkeys, and modern beehives were provided for the residents. A government-contracted tractor visited the village each year from 1972 to 1975 to cultivate a village plot, and maize and millet seed were provided." Similar investments were made for each settlement.

This enthusiasm to 'develop' these hunter-gatherers who were regarded as mere wanderers (UTAMADUNI 1982:62) was all the time viewed with envy by the agricultural neighbours. Any provision of goods and services increased the number of potential non-Hadzabe 'settlers' and by 1975 there were more non-Hadzabe in these settlements than the Hadzabe themselves. In fact most of the Hadzabe had slipped back into the bush. The few who remained in the settlements were unable to provide for themselves through agriculture and had to depend on government food rations. Enderlein (1971:2) who lived in Hadzabeland at that time made the following observation: ". . . most of the Watindiga have been collected by the Government and put into agricultural settlement schemes in order to transform their traditional way of life and make them share the benefits of civilization. The poor agricultural potential of the area and the reluctance displayed by the Watindiga towards agriculture make one doubt whether they will ever become self-reliant in this field. In fact the inhabitants of the settlements are today, some ten years after founding, not able to fend for themselves. They are being fed by the Government and these

ujamaa villages could better be described as refugee camps."

As years went by, the government put less money and effort into the settlements so that only those who could fend for themselves through agriculture could stay. While almost all the Hadzabe had gone back to the bush by 1979, the settlements had been taken over (numerically) by the non-Hadzabe. The sedentary agricultural Iraqw, Sukuma and Sanzu had occupied these villages and were enjoying the facilities which were originally meant for the hunter-gatherers. The attempts to sedentarize the Hadzabe had again failed after one and a half decades and the policy-makers did not understand why these people ran away from the symbols of development such as brick houses, schools, dispensaries, piped water and so on. In order to understand this issue in greater detail one has to look at the qualities of the life which the Hadzabe were required to abandon.

Traditional Hadzabe Self-Sufficiency in Food

The Hadzabe hunter-gatherers obtain their food mostly through the utilization of nature and not the transformation of it. Rather than break the soil and remove its vegetation cover, plant the seeds and wait for several months to get the returns, the Hadzabe pick and eat the fruits and berries which are readily available on their land. All they have to do is to move from an area in which the supplies have dwindled to another in which they are still abundant. Woodburn (1979) observed rightly that obtaining food among the Hadzabe is always relatively simple and famine is unknown. Due to the relatively easy availability of traditional foods in Hadzabeland there is a fairly high degree of personal autonomy among the Hadzabe. Their social organization is egalitarian and permits great physical mobility.

With their remarkable knowledge of their environment the Hadzabe are able to provide themselves with sufficiently nutritive food with relatively very little effort. A recent study showed that on the average the Hadzabe spend three quarters of their waking time in leisure activities (McDowell, 1981a:8). It is further observed that through their traditional economy the Hadzabe consume 174.7 grams of meat protein per person per day (McDowell 1981a:11) which is four times the minimum daily protein requirements. Yet according to a survey by the Tanzania Food and Nutrition Centre (1973/74 - 1977/78) many other Tanzanians did not receive adequate daily protein. Apart from the protein the Hadzabe consume a lot of vitamins through the variety of berries and fruits they eat. Honey, one of the most desired foods of the Hadzabe is consumed at least once a week on the average. This food item is instant energy and facilitates their travelling in the bush. As far back as 1962 it was reported that the Hadzabe children were well-nourished in comparison with other East African children (Jelliffe 1962),

This standard of health and nourishment in a hunting and gathering society can be achieved under given ecological conditions. Hadzabeland covers about 2,000 square miles and has many varieties of seasonal fruits and berries in abundance particularly baobab, adansonia digitata, the desert plum, tamarind and the berries of the tooth brush bush, salvadora persica which are similar to black currants. Some species ripen during the dry-season while others ripen during the rainy season. Throughout the year, therefore, the Hadzabe have a number of options of where to go for food, although these options become fewer during the dry season. Apart from the plant foods, Hadzabeland is full of wild animals and birds. These are systematically hunted and eaten with an emphasis on individual self-sufficiency and the sharing of the immediate surplus (Woodburn 1980, 1981; McDowell 1981a; Ndagala 1983a).

The other ecological feature of Hadzabeland is that it receives very low rainfall, annual precipitation ranges between 10 and 25 inches and is highly unpredictable. Some showers are very localized and what is generally known to be the rainy season may well turn out dry (Enderlein 1971:7). Agriculture is only possible in the limited areas with permanent surface water. Bagshawe (1925:117) describes this land as "an inhospitable wilderness, full of game but heavily infested with tsetse fly and very short of drinkable water." Of course, the fly has retreated from those areas which have been cleared for agriculture or livestock keeping, but all the uncleared land is still full of tsetse fly. Livestock keeping is thus possible in those areas which have been cleared. The areas which have permanent surface water have, since the thirties, been increasingly alienated by the agricultural groups. From the fifties the pastoral Datoga occupied the areas which were at that time cleared against tsetse fly. The agro-pastoral Sukuma have also occupied those areas which are relatively better suited to agriculture and livestock keeping. Growing human and livestock population in the areas surrounding Hadzabeland have thus put great pressure on the resources which were once exclusively used by the nomadic hunter-gatherers. Although year after year the Hadzabe find themselves with fewer options of where to go, they still produce for themselves qualitatively and quantitatively better food than some of their sedentary neighbours.

How About Development and Policy?

In examining development and policy as they relate to the nomadic hunter-gatherers we really have to look at the polarity between sedentism and nomadism as they relate to the goals and aspirations of the respective nations. In practice it appears that development is associated with a movement from nomadism to sedentism and not the other way around irrespective of the costs. Policy-makers for almost all nomadic and pastoral areas have sought to make nomadic peoples sedentary. The benefits of the process seem to be assumed or taken for granted. For over fifty years government policy to 'develop' the Hadzabe has basically been a move to settle them, to make them sedentary cultivators or stock-keepers. And throughout those years no genuine assessment was ever taken of the actual benefits of the individual polars in the given conditions. Yet every forced move to sedentism (development?) was followed by voluntary retreat to nomadism (primitivity?) by the Hadzabe.

Every time the Hadzabe left the bush to live in the settlements they lost their autonomy, their traditional self-reliance and self-sufficiency in food and lived as 'refugees' dependent on the monotonous rations provided by government. Their nutritional status weakened and a number of them died. As land was cleared to enable them to live by agriculture, so went their traditional food sources such as fruit trees and berry bushes. And when agriculture failed due to the poor rains and poor crop husbandry, the Hadzabe went back to the bush where they had relatively fewer options than before. Although, to the policy-makers, sedentism and agriculture were a pre-condition to development, to the Hadzabe they were bitter experiences of drudgery and hunger. Development must therefore mean more than sedentism and agriculture. To me, the development of a people should mean their liberation from ecological, social, political and economic pressures and limitations and access to a rising standard of living. (Ndagala 1982a). I would accept the sedentarization process as development if it went hand in hand with the said liberation.

Woodburn (1968) found it remarkable that the Hadzabe had no famine in their history in an area where severe droughts and major livestock plagues have inflicted widespread hunger on the people in the last 100 years. The victims were pastoral

and sedentary agricultural peoples and not the nomadic hunter-gatherers. In fact at one time or other people from neighbouring agricultural societies, especially the Nyisanzu took refuge in the Hadzabeland and lived as hunter-gatherers (Kitunga 1973; Ndagala 1979; Woodburn 1979). Some of these people intermarried with the Hadzabe and their descendants are living as Hadzabe. It is because of these 'refugees' that the Hadzabe are often called Kindiga or Tindiga by the neighbouring societies. Kindiga is a derogatory Nyisanzu term meaning run away. The term was originally used to refer to those people who had run away from the Nyisanzu villages to the bush. Although some of these people ran away to avoid colonial forced labour and recruitment to the army in the World Wars, a greater number ran away from famine. Given the general view of the policy-makers the, Kindiga were running away from development. In the light of the ecological conditions in which the Hadzabe live and their comparatively better health and nutritional status, the policy-makers cannot avoid re-assessing hunting and gathering if they are to avoid past mistakes.

The Hadzabe are neither stubborn nor resistant to innovations as has been suggested on many occasions. Moreover, given the shortage of drinking water and the prevalence of the tsetse fly, nature has not been favourable to the Hadzabe. The relatively good standard of life they have had is a result of their immense familiarity with their environment and their knowledge in utilizing the available resources. Rational or positive development should utilize this knowledge in raising the standard of living of the Hadzabe with no undue emphasis on sedentism or agricultural production.

It is important to point out here that the measures carried out by the post-independence authorities in respect to the Hadzabe were carried out in good faith, though in the wrong way. The intention to have the Hadzabe enjoy the services provided by their government just like other Tanzanians was a good one. The wrong thing with the measures was their total rejection of everything in nomadic hunting and gathering. The Hadzabe were required to give up everything they had and adopt 'development packages' from the authorities. Many decisions were made for them without them. Planning was done from the top and this was considered necessary by the majority of the respective authorities. To justify this practice Kitunga (1973:17) writes that planning for the Hadzabe ". . . is still done from the top, and I think this will be necessary for some time to come. . . . This is so because the Tindiga cannot plan for themselves. They do not realize the importance of living together." (sic.) The Hadzabe realize the importance of living together and that is why they live in bands sharing the products of their labour. Moreover, they know what they want and what they need and can achieve these needs and wants if they are given the right assistance. They should be enabled to produce their own food, build their own houses and so on instead of being made dependents. This is the implication of Tanzania's policies on self reliance which emphasize the fact that the development of a people is brought about by the people themselves.

The fifty year attempt to sedentarize the Hadzabe had an impact on their way of life. Some Hadzabe learned how to cultivate and are willing to do so if allowed to choose their own sites. A good number of children are going to school whenever their parents are camping within easy reach of the schools. This means that the Hadzabe are willing to take up the innovations selectively. Whatever the options and alternative possibilities of earning a living the Hadzabe are offered, it should be borne in mind that there is much to gain by not giving up hunting and gathering entirely. For example, why leave large quantities of berries to rot in the neighbourhood just because they are wild? Why grow your potatoes under difficult conditions instead of digging up the wild root tubers? Forest environment is not necessarily bad because

the Foresters, Game Scouts, and 'Professional Hunters', all of whom are accepted as 'modern' and are acknowledged to be living fairly well, do spend most of their time in the forest. The issue, therefore, is not whether the Hadzabe should live by wild cropping or not but how they can meet their basic needs at growing levels both qualitatively and quantitatively in the light of existing constraints and opportunities. Given the socio-economic conditions in and around Hadzabeland the zero hour is approaching fast when the necessary measures must be taken before the Hadzabe perish as a people.

The Hadzabe cannot maintain their nutritional status for long due to the fast alienation of their land. Clearing of the bush against tsetse fly and for agriculture has opened up their land to more people and livestock, thereby putting excessive pressure on the resources. The flow of Yaeda River in Mbulu District for instance, has in the past twenty years decreased by half due to intensive cultivation near its banks. Fruit and berry bearing trees and shrubs have been destroyed in all the areas which have been occupied by the agricultural and pastoral groups.

For the last two centuries the land in which the Hadzabe live was occupied by no person other than themselves. Immigration into Hadzabeland has been very intensive in the past 35 years (Woodburn 1962; McDowell 1981b). Presently the plant resources are also being destroyed through land clearing for charcoal making. Unless the Hadzabe are assisted by the government they can do nothing to protect their land from alienation and degradation. Sanford (1981) however, cautions us against relying on governments to protect land rights. Regarding pastoralist land rights Sanford says that, "One should not rely on government as a way of defending pastoralists' land rights against incursion by cultivators. The almost universal experience is that governments will not enforce this technical judgement on appropriate land use against political pressures. . . . land rights have to be protected by adequate property rights and a legal system in which these rights can be defended."

In Tanzania, land is owned by the State and individuals have usufruct rights on the basis of customary law and statutory rights of occupancy. Practice has shown, however, that whenever there is a dispute over land-use, those with relatively more visible signs of use or occupancy in addition to sedentism tend to win. Such signs are land clearing or cultivation in the previous season(s), houses and other man-made structures. This means that cultivators tend to win their claims against pastoralists while the latter tend to win their claims against the hunter-gatherers. In order to gain legal control over what is traditionally theirs, the Hadzabe must be helped to form institutions through which they will secure rights of occupancy for their respective localities.

It is now realized by the authorities that the success of any programme among the Hadzabe and indeed all nomadic peoples will depend on its being understood and accepted by the people themselves. The people are now allowed an opportunity to weigh the benefits of the proposed programmes against other alternatives. Nevertheless, the Hadzabe need additional skills in order to participate gainfully in the decision-making institutions. There are already efforts to identify ways in which these skills can be provided on the basis of the people's articulated needs. Moreover, it is now strongly felt that as long as these people are kept away from fully participating in decision-making they will continue to be marginalised and finally be squeezed from any chances of economic self-sufficiency in future. (McDowell 1981a).

Discussion

Dan Aronson: The tsetse clearance schemes seem in your account to have been the first time when the government actively abetted a process of encroachment (acting in favour of the pastoralists). Is there any record of the rights, collective or individual of the hunter-gatherers having been claimed, discussed or otherwise explicitly dealt with?

Ndagala: We have not come across any such records. The hunter-gatherers do not seem to have been considered at that time (1950s) possibly because, to the colonial state, they were useless since they paid no tax. The pastoralists, on the other hand, featured strongly because they paid poll-tax and a cattle sales tax. It is equally possible that the eradication of tsetse fly was seen as a good thing and its implications to hunting and gathering were not realized.

A. Balikci: Has James Woodburn been consulted by the Tanzanian government or another local agency on matters of socio-economic development?

Ndagala: Dr. Woodburn has been consulted under the Rift Valley Research Project under which the Hadzabe are being studied with the view of mobilizing them for their own socio-economic development. James was in Tanzania in 1980 and 1981 and participated in one of our workshops in which the administrators and planners, researchers and the Hadzabe exchanged ideas as equals regarding the future of hunting and gathering. James and the other researchers were not consulted in the earlier policy moves because their work or their whereabouts were not immediately known to the people who were making the moves.

Freedman: What is the role of international agencies in the attempts to settle the Hadzabe? Exactly who has given the equipment and the facilities for the settlement of these people? If not international aid agencies, then what branches of the Tanzanian government have done this and with what expertise? The question really seeks to find out who is responsible for the errors.

Ndagala: There was no aid agency involved in the attempts to settle the Hadzabe. All the facilities were provided by the government. One fact is worth note apart from the errors, and that is the fact that the government was willing to service all the citizens including the poor minority groups like the Hadzabe. The intention was to have the Hadzabe get something and not give something, but in the process the errors were committed. In the long run when things didn't work for the Hadzabe settlements, the government relaxed the programmes and looked for new inputs from the Hadzabe themselves and those people who were willing to provide information from previous or further research. Research findings which could have helped avoid the errors were already circulating in the academic world with nothing available to the people who needed them foremost. It is for this reason that I urge researchers to stop sitting back until the errors have been made and then go out looking for the 'evil man'. We should use our findings to stop errors from being made.

Dalton: You said in your paper that agriculturists usually won in land disputes with pastoralists and that pastoralists usually won in land disputes with hunter-gatherers. Does this fact reflect the nature of political participation; that agriculturists have greater influence with their government say than pastoralists?

Ndagala: Yes, in a way it does since use of land or user rights have to be proved

physically on the disputed area. Since the agriculturalists inflict relatively greater physical/visible impact on the land they tend to win. That is why the hunter-gatherers who inflict almost no damage to the land have to be protected by specifically designed legislation with specific safe-guards to see that it works.

FOOTNOTES

¹This paper was presented to the Symposium on Development and Policy in the Nomadic and Pastoral Sectors organised by the IUAES Commission on Nomadic Peoples and its Canadian Committee at McGill University, Montreal, 24th September 1983.

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