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Dorothy Louise Hodgson. *Being Maasai, Becoming Indigenous: Postcolonial Politics in a Neoliberal World.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2011. xix + 265 pp. $70.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-253-35620-8; $24.95 (paper), ISBN 978-0-253-22305-0.

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Fratkin on Hodgson

Dorothy Hodgson's *Being Maasai, Becoming Indigenous* is a comprehensive study of "indigenous" non-governmental organizations among the Maasai of Tanzania. The book reflects the author's extensive research among Maasai communities and offers important insights about civil society, the role of local NGOs and their international sponsors, and problems faced by local minority groups seeking economic and political justice vis-à-vis the larger national state. This book traces how Maasai organizations developed and transformed from groups that used the "indigenous" label based on their public recognition as "traditional pastoralists," into active members of civil society seeking economic justice and political recognition from their national government. In so doing, the book describes tensions and personalities within and between various Maasai NGOs as they debated and practiced different strategies.

The Maasai are a superficially well-known people, particularly to American and European visitors to the game park areas of Tanzania and Kenya. Superficial in the sense that one is directed (by tour groups and national governments) to look at Maasai's "pastoral image," as has been previously described by Dr. Hodgson, consisting of semi-naked warriors carrying spears and wearing long, braided, red-dyed hair. But the reality of Maasai life, brought to life in this book, is one of a relatively disempowered minority and marginalized group, whose political activities have included adopting the "indigenous people's" mantle as a way to struggle for land rights and cultural autonomy. The book introduces us to a variety of players and constituencies within the Maasai community, including educated elites, women's groups, and members of traditional Maasai society, presenting one of the very few "thick description" ethnographies of NGOs, of any type. Dr. Hodgson is not an invisible writer but an active participant in many of the discussions with the local organizers and activists; this owes to her own long experience as an anthropologist of Maasai and gender studies, and her work in development in Tanzania. Moreover, this study shows the range of strategies that indigenous and local NGOs must adopt to achieve their goals vis-à-vis the Tanzanian state.

The introduction ("Positionings") presents a useful overview of key theoretical issues in the study of NGOs and development. The author defines her framework of "political positioning and repositioning" in reference to Maasai activists and organizations. She reviews the literature on the indigenous rights movement, criticizing, for example, Arjun Appadurai, as she argues for salience of addressing the state. This is a point that the author returns to later in the book, and I appreciate it for combating the "failed states" orientation of African development issues.

Chapter 1, "Becoming Indigenous in Africa," is a richly detailed account of Tanzanian Maasai, of whom Hodgson has written extensively (*Once Intrepid Warriors*, 2004; *Church of Women,* 2005). Here she recounts the development and history of an indigenous rights movement, particularly from the perspective of local activists interacting with international organizations and the UN community. The reader will find especially useful the section "From 'First Peoples' to Self Identification," which describes the formation of indigenous peoples organizations among Maasai and how they underwent changes both in structure and purpose over time.

Chapter 2, "Maasai NGOs, The Tanzanian State, and the Politics of Indigeneity," presents a sober and honest portrayal of Maasai organizations, particularly in its contrast of the aims and personal leadership of the organizations Kipoc and Inyuat e Maa. The author presents a concise history of Maasai relations with colonial and post-colonial regimes, including a critique of the post-Nyerere