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“CUTTING THE HEAD OF THE ROARING MONSTER”: HOMOSEXUALITY AND REPRESSION IN AFRICA

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ABSTRACT This paper examines how a proposed conference of gays and lesbians in 2006 in Ghana created tensions and repercussions from the social, cultural, religious and political factors, which worked to repress same-sex discourse in the country. The new wave of homophobic expression that ensued is partly a product of the new globalization and also a manifestation of the clash between what is considered “African” and “un-African” social and sexual behavior. This study shows that the government of Ghana and religious institutions did not view homosexuality as a human rights issue as in the case of South Africa, but a form of “sexual colonialism” or Western imposition on Ghanaians. Africanists working on West Africa have yet to seriously place homosexuality on academic agenda. We fill this gap in the current stage of sexuality and African studies by looking at how the proposed conference of gays and lesbians in 2006 in Ghana integrated Ghana’s experience of “unnaturalness” of homosexuality and homophobia into those of other parts of the world.

Key Words: Homosexuality; Repression; Ghana; Tradition; Western cultural infiltration.

“Let us wait until they gather in Accra so that we can cut them in pieces.”⁽¹⁾

INTRODUCTION

The epigraph is an excerpt from a statement made by a caller during a local, Joy FM radio talk show in Accra, Ghana’s capital city on August 31, 2006. Prince Kweku McDonald, President of the Gay and Lesbian Association of Ghana (GALAG), had announced on that day the proposed public gathering of homosexuals in Accra and other undisclosed Ghanaian towns and cities. Ghanaians through print and electronic media expressed their position on this controversial subject, leaning on a host of ideologies structured along the confines of religious, moral, and cultural boundaries. Similar to the misconception in North America and Europe, some Ghanaians believed the incidence of HIV/AIDS to be higher among homosexuals, and saw the legitimization of their presence as a cog in the wheel of the war against the dreaded disease (Samanhya, 2006). However, there is no empirical data or scientific evidence supporting this claim.

It is important to note that not all Ghanaians frowned at the sexual freedom of homosexuals. Indeed, a cross-section of college students did not subscribe to the idea of censoring sexual behavior of homosexuals.⁽²⁾ Some held that the repression of same-sex relationships contradicted Ghana’s democratic principles, its rich history rooted in Pan-Africanism, and the fight against colonial oppres-

sion (The Chronicle, 2006). However, the overwhelming influence of the homophobic press, political and religious leaders, and the general public combined, ultimately did not create adequate visibility, verbal or otherwise, for a pro-homosexual discourse.

This paper seeks to investigate the public outcry for and against homosexuality in Ghana, which surfaced mostly in local newspapers and on radio talk shows immediately after McDonald's announcement of the proposed international conference. We posit that, as in other parts of the continent and the Western world, Ghanaian opponents of same-sex relationships were able to contain homosexuals and their supporters by using the print and electronic media as a means of intimidation. The Ghanaian government, just as its Zimbabwean, Kenyan and Ugandan counterparts, and also religious institutions, largely perceive homosexuality as another form of Western cultural infiltration and imperialism. They clamored for the preservation of heterosexuality as the only form of African sexuality while amplifying the implications of same-sex affairs on the conventional family and marriage system, generational continuity, and religious values.

Data used for writing this paper include newspaper articles (both in print and online) and websites, including some that were based in Europe and North America. The government and its agencies did not conduct any opinion poll on the matter. However, public discussions generally tended to abhor homosexuality. We frequently use the words, "Ghanaian public," or "Ghanaians," to designate the people who expressed their views through the print and electronic media. It was difficult to locate members and officials of the GALAG because of the generally tense homophobic environment and the fear of prosecution. Our data about the perspectives of Ghanaian homosexuals therefore is derived from interviews that McDonald gave the press, published in both private and government-owned newspapers. We also administered an open-ended questionnaire among different categories of people, including college students, government officials, religious leaders and the general public.

HOMOSEXUAL AFRICA? ARGUMENTS AND COUNTER-ARGUMENTS

The presence or absence of homosexuality in Africa is still generating serious debate among scholars and commentators of different ideological persuasions. Contemporary commentators and authors tend to freely borrow from the ideas of earlier counterparts, who saw African sexuality as predominantly heterosexual and devoid of the so-called "negative" influence of homosexual behavior and fantasies. Edward Gibbon is said to have made the first most influential comment on the absence of homosexuality in Africa, in a study published in 1781: "I believe and hope, that the Negroes in their own country were exempt from this moral pestilence [i.e. homosexual vice]" (Gibbon cited in Murray & Roscoe, 1998: xii). Sir Richard Burton, a prominent Englishman wrote on the eve of the colonial invasion of Africa, "the negro race is mostly untainted by sodomy and

tribalism” (Burton cited in Murray & Roscoe, 1998: xii). For Burton, the Sotadic zone where homosexuality was indigenous did not extend to south of the Sahara in Africa (Murray & Roscoe, 1998: xii). In another connection, the story of the *Kabaka* (king) of the Buganda who was rumored to have executed thirty pages that declined to have sex with him in 1886 is important, for it points to the presence of homosexuality in nineteenth century Buganda (Hoad, 2007: xi). While this story seemed to have confirmed the acceptance of same-sex affairs among the elite class in that part of Africa, attempts have also been made to link the practice to the influence of outsiders, notably the Arab traders (Hoad, 2007: xi).

The interconnectivity between homosexuality and cultural “infiltration” and “imperialism” is replete in the works of social anthropologists who visited Africa during the first half of the twentieth century. According to these colonial era writers, Africa was composed of primitive cultures, which were not only pure, but also devoid of the influence from Western cultural traits, characterized by a high degree of sexual laxity (Murray & Roscoe, 1998). This remark does not suggest that colonial social anthropologists were not obsessed with several other patterns of African sexuality, which they considered uncivilized or uncultured, as Vaughan (1991) has shown in her book entitled *Curing their Ills*. Early twentieth century anthropologists tended to dismiss the findings when they observed evidence of homosexual behaviors, and refused to accept the practice as an institutionalized or indigenous sexual orientation (Aderinto, 2008b).

During the 1990s, the subject of same-sex preference caught the attention of African leaders as some African homosexuals demanded official recognition. Some African leaders because of a combination of factors which include but were not limited to the need to satisfy their conservative and largely heterosexual constituencies, resisted the reform of laws that criminalized same-sex relationships. Human rights groups and politicians the world over protested against Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe’s much publicized statement about the conduct of homosexuals in his country: “If dogs and pigs don’t do it, why must human beings?⁽³⁾ Can human beings be human if they do worse than pigs?” His reaction to international protests that followed this statement confirmed that he meant what he said: “They can demonstrate, but if they come here [to Zimbabwe] we will throw them in jail” (cited in Dunton & Palmberg, 1996: 13). On homosexuals in Western countries and their presence in Zimbabwe, Mugabe added, “Let the Americans keep their sodomy, bestiality, stupid and foolish ways to themselves, out of Zimbabwe.... Let them be gay in the US, Europe and elsewhere.... They shall be sad people here.”⁽⁴⁾

In the 1990s, Mugabe was not the only African statesman that demonstrated antipathy for homosexuals. The stances taken by his Kenyan, Ugandan, and Namibian counterparts were equally unpalatable. Yoweri Museveni, the President of Uganda was quoted by New Vision, a state-owned newspaper as having said: “I have told the CID [Criminal Investigations Department] to look for homosexuals, lock them up, and charge them.”⁽⁵⁾

Provocative statements made by these statesmen during the 1990s boosted

global awareness of the African story of homosexuality and repression, created solidarity among gays and lesbians worldwide, and introduced into African politics a debate that North American and European countries had contested for decades, if not centuries. Importantly, the involvement of well-known public figures intensified and popularized the debate, thus creating more avenues for tension between the State, religions institutions, and custodians of African cultural values and heritage on the one hand, and those who see repression of same-sex relationships as human rights abuse on the other.

The presence or absence of indigenous homosexuality in Africa has equally generated a hot debate among academics and scholarly publications. In the preface to her popular book, *Male Daughters, Female Husbands*, Amadiume, a Nigerian sociologist, categorically stated that female-to-female marriage among the Nnobi Igbo should not be confused for lesbianism, arguing instead that support and cooperation between women, “do not imply lesbian sexual practice” (Amadiume, 1987: 7). Amadiume directed her remark at black lesbians who adopted “prejudiced interpretations of African situations to justify their choices of sexual alternatives which have their roots and meanings in the West” (Amadiume, 1987: 7). Her criticism is an integral component of a now well established paradigm that seeks to correct, reinterpret, and reconstruct the imposition of Western ideas on African cultural experience, especially in the study of women and gender (Awe, 1977; Amadiume, 1987; Oyewumi, 1997).

Amadiume’s stance did not go well with scholars such as Hoad who argued that, “an identity politics of sameness, literally of appropriative identification, is potentially as harmful as the fetishizable difference of exoticism” (Hoad, 2007: xxv). Pincheon (2000) called attention to a sort of cultural nationalism epitomized in the denial of indigenous homosexuality in Africa, especially among African-born scholars. He claimed that facts are sometimes misrepresented by academics because of the need to deny the institutionalization of same-sex relationships in the continent.

The dearth of scholarly research on African homosexuality, without doubt, is largely responsible for the well-circulated proposition that same-sex relationships are “exotic” and “un-African.” African-centered academic research rather than donor-driven studies may in some ways be capable of giving more insight into this somewhat dark corner of African history and culture. Anthologies including *Boy-Wives and Female Husbands* (Murray & Roscoe, 1998) and monographs including *Hungochani* (Epprecht, 2004), among others, are beginning to fill this gap in African studies. Authors of the various chapters of *Boy-Wives and Female Husbands* challenge the un-Africanness of homosexuality, looking at institutionalized same-sex relationships in socio-cultural context. Their findings counteract homophobic prepositions that homosexuality is a Western implantation among some African ethnic groups. Equally interesting is Epprecht’s (1998) work on indigenous homosexuality in Zimbabwe, which debunked the assertion that it was introduced by white settlers, and traces the history of same-sex affairs to periods before colonial rule.

The appearance of new studies, including Hoad’s (2007) *African Intimacies*

and Epprecht's (2008) *Heterosexual Africa*, is not likely to resolve this contentious debate because more micro-studies of African sexualities are needed to refute or validate the notion that Africa is entirely heterosexual. The continent of Africa is vast, and likewise, African culture is not monolithic but diverse. If Africa is home to thousands of ethnic groups and nationalities, then one should also expect variations in African sexual experience and practices (both heterosexual and homosexual). Sexual variations establish the significance of conceptualizing sex and sexuality in geographical and cultural terms, thus negating the now infamous theory of a distinct African sexuality propounded by Caldwell et al. (1989: 185-234). A short insight into the case of three ethnic groups in Nigeria, the world's most populous black country, can be used to further throw light into the dynamism as well as complexity of the African sexual experience.

Transvestism and cross-dressing can be found among the Yoruba and Hausa. Hausa transvestites (*yan daudu*, men who talk like women), in spite of the fact that they sometimes play an important role in Hausa Bori religious observances, tend to be associated more with deviance and criminalized, accused of serving as pimps and procurers in northern Nigeria's prostitution network (Pittin, 2002: 214-235; Gaudio, 1998: 115-128; Salamone, 2005: 75-86). Some Hausa *yan daudu* are bisexuals, while others who are entirely heterosexual enjoy cross-dressing. Yet some engage in predominantly same-sex behaviors (Pittin, 2002: 214-235; Salamone, 2005: 75-86). However, a form of cross-dressing among the Yoruba is restricted to certain categories of people, such as the *Elegun Sango*, the priests of the *Sango* deity. Matory (1994: 206-208) has described the feminine character of *Elegun Sango* (biological males) who usually have multiple wives and children, but found no evidence that they have sexual intercourse with other men. The *Aboke 'Badan* (the hereditary priest of Oke 'Badan deity in Ibadan, a Yoruba town) who is a biological male permanently wears female hairstyles (*suku*, *opalangbe*, *koloba*) and cross-dresses as a female during the annual worship of the deity. As a spirit medium of a female deity (*Atage olomu oru*), it is incumbent on him to cross-dress not only during the annual festival, but also when occasionally in the midst of other priests and traditional chiefs of the town. However, the *Aboke* does not engage in any same-sex behavior (Aderinto, 2008a).⁽⁶⁾ According to Matory and Oyewumi, authors of the award-winning books *Sex and the Empire that is No More* and *The Invention of Women* respectively, gender and sexuality is an integral component of Yoruba religion, and cross-dressing further validates the fluidity of gender as a social and historical construction among the Yoruba (Matory, 1994; Oyewumi, 1997).

Yoruba women in precolonial and colonial times would encourage and, in some cases, help their husbands to search for new brides in order to secure time to engage in trade (especially long-distance) and limit the enormous social responsibilities that marriage sanctioned upon them (Aderinto, 2008a). It was not unusual for them to help their husbands raise the bride price and other requirements for marriage consummation, thus performing the responsibilities of the bridegroom. This kind of arrangement is definitely different from the

woman-to-woman marriage that Amadiume studied. In the Yoruba case, the new bride is married into a household always headed by a man. However, both practices enhanced women's economic and social standing both within the extended family and the community at large. In a traditional Yoruba compound (*agbo ile*) and household (*ile*), senior wives address new brides and junior wives as "my wife (*iyawo mi or aya mi*)," but this does not mean that they have any form of erotic or sexual contact or relations. Wives may likewise address male and female members of the house as "my husband/s (*oko mi plural oko wa*)" (Fadipe, 1970: 97-100). But again this does not mean they engage in sexual fantasies or relations. Linguistic patterns and actual practices do not always correlate and of course vary from culture to culture. The authors of the following prominent works and many others on Yoruba history and culture did not document any form of institutionalized same-sex relationships among the people (Olurankinse, 1992; Ojoade, 1983; Olajubu, 1972; Johnson, 1921; Fadipe, 1970; Ajisafe, 1924).

This brief discussion of sexual variation among three out of Nigeria's over 300 ethno-cultural groups leads to one conclusion: if it is unprofessional and unscientific to generalize that Africa is mainly heterosexual as Epprecht (2008) maintained or that there is a distinct form of sexuality which Caldwell et al. (1989: 185-234) believed is promiscuous and facilitate the entrenchment of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, then it is equally inaccurate to generalize about the existence of indigenous homosexuality among all African ethnicities, especially in the absence of micro and empirical research. The point we make is that the fact that traces of indigenous same-sex relationships are found among one ethnic group should not be taken to mean that it is prevalent among all African ethnicities, and that more academic and systematic finding focusing on cultural and historical construction of gender, sex and sexuality in specific cultures is needed to ventilate this contentious aspect of African history and culture.

HOMOSEXUALITY: ITS UN-AFRICANNESS AND WESTERN CULTURAL INFILTRATION IN GHANA

Again, on August 31, 2006, Prince Kweku McDonald, the President of the Gay and Lesbian Association of Ghana (GALAG) went on Joy FM to remind Ghanaians about the rights of gays and lesbians (Ennin, 2006). He also announced that a proposed international conference was to be held in Accra, the nation's capital on September 23 and other locations, such as Koforidua in the Eastern region (Quaye, 2006).

This public announcement by the President of GALAG, echoed in other local radio stations and media outlets, unleashed an unprecedented atmosphere of hatred for homosexuals. McDonald's unexpected proclamation of the strength of the movement gained front-page newspaper coverage in *The Chronicle*, *The Accra Daily Mail*, *Daily Guide*, *The Ghanaian Times* and *The Daily Graphic*, and several websites. Indeed, ripple effects from McDonald's announcement

went beyond the media. It penetrated the walls of the government, churches, mosques, college campuses and the larger public conversation. Strong opinions rapidly emerged: David Adotey Saka, a storekeeper warned that Ghana was “descending into the days of Sodom and Gomorrah (Boateng, 2006).” Valerie Bempomaah Okai, a college student and a Christian, stated that homosexuality “is an indictment on our culture and our beliefs.” Akosua Dunia, a street vender queried “as a society where are we drifting towards?” Christine Okaine, a Christian hair beautician claimed, “man was created in God’s image to procreate... gays and lesbians are telling God how things should be done, which is wrong” (Boateng, 2006).

Kwamena Bartels, the Minister for Information and National Orientation made the first official remark to the proposed meeting. Bartels not only proclaimed that any attempts to hold the international conference in Ghana would not be entertained, but threatened members of the GALAG that they would be arrested if they disobeyed government orders. Bartels stated that, “the government would like to make it absolutely clear that it shall not permit the proposed conference... the government does not and shall not condone any activity which violently offends the culture, morality and heritage of the entire people of Ghana” (Sawatzky, 2006). He further cited a relevant section of the criminal code, which criminalized “unnatural” behaviors such as homosexuality (Sawatzky, 2006). Bartels’ announcement is in conflict with Ghana’s Constitution which “guarantees the protection of all human rights of every person in Ghana, whatever his race, place of origin, political opinion, color, religion, creed or gender.”⁽⁷⁾

Religious authorities and the government expressed similar ideas about “natural” sexual behavior (heterosexuality) and the promotion of “decent” social and sexual behavior. The ordination of a homosexual priest in North America was and is still considered a religious aberration among Ghana’s Christian leaders who were afraid that the proposed conference and official recognition of homosexuals could undermine the spiritual purity of the church, or even lead to the rise of homosexual priests within the church hierarchies (Addo, 2006). The Christian Council of Ghana (CCG), the umbrella organization of all Christian denominations in the country, served as the mouthpiece of their flock. The religious body mobilized its constituency to denounce GALAG’s effort to come out of the closet. The CCG abhorred the formation of the gay and lesbian association and upheld the ideas of Ghana’s absolute hetero-normativity. The CCG referenced a passage of the Bible’s Leviticus 20:13, “If a man lies with a male as he lies with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination...they shall surely be put to death,” to validate the ungodliness of homosexuality. The CCG tried to underscore the importance of drawing a line between human rights issues, religious issues and the definition of cultural taboos. Rev. Dr. Paul Kofi Fynn, chairman of CCG emphasized that there was some level of limitations to the rights of individuals or groups. Fynn declared, “the fact that the constitution of Ghana guarantees freedom of association, movement, speech and worship, is not a license to misbehave and satanize our country as Sodom and

Gomorrah did in the Bible” (Fordjour, 2006).

The CCG was not alone in the condemnation of the institutional acceptance of homosexuals. Indeed, other Christian denominations followed similar approaches in denouncing GALAG and supporting the Ghanaian government, which had the political and legal machinery to criminalize and prosecute people accused of illegal sexual behavior. *The Ghanaian Times*, a national newspaper, reported that the Anglican Church of Ghana (ACG) also showed solidarity with Minister Bartels of the Ministry of Information and National Orientation. It is significant to note that the spiritual integrity of the Anglican Church in Africa was and still is confounded by the decision of some of its sister congregations in North America and Europe to ordain homosexual priests and bishops in the early 1990s. Certainly, the emergence of GALAG in Ghana struck a highly sensitive religious and emotional nerve prompting a spontaneous response throughout its dioceses in Ghana. According to Rev. Justice O. Akrofi, the Archbishop of ACG, it was imperative that all religious groups speak out publicly against GALAG in order to prevent the expansion of homosexual organizations and movements in Ghana and throughout Africa (Owusu, 2006).

The CCG and Anglican Church were not the only Christian groups that condemned the official recognition of homosexuals in Ghana. Apostle Dr. Michael Kwabena Ntummy of the Church of Pentecost, lamented that the church would not ignore Leviticus 18:22; 20:13, because it emphasized that sexual relations should be between a man and a woman only, and that those who crossed such sacred intimate lines established by the supreme God would be punished on the day of judgment. He reminded the Pentecostals that, “as spiritual watchdogs, we wish to warn of the consequential disfavor and wrath of God on this nation if Ghana fails to condemn homosexuality” (The Ghanaian Times, 2006). The Pentecostal Church of Ghana, The Assemblies of God Church, another charismatic movement with over 2 million members, praised the Ghanaian government for leading the way to prevent gays and lesbians from gaining social visibility in the country. The leaders of the Assemblies of God of Ghana made a direct connection between traditional value systems, the government’s position, and blessings from God. In the words of Rev. W. W. Dontoh, General Superintendent of the Church, “Our ancestors and elders had very good reasons for condemning this practice hence our culture does not accept gay practice...by refusing [the] gays to hold their meeting in this country, Ghana has proven to the world that we are a nation with strong moral values. God will bless us abundantly for honouring Him in this direction” (The Spectator, 2006).

Christian leaders were not the only religious authorities that publicly denounced homosexuality. It was rumored that a public demonstration of a national magnitude was planned to register the public disdain for homosexuals by the Vice President of Ghana, Alhaji Airu Mahama, the National Chief Imam, Sheikh Osman Nuru Sharubutu and a traditional chief of the Gã, an ethnic group in Accra.⁽⁸⁾ Presumably, the anti-gay and lesbian rally did not take place, because with the cancellation of the GALAG’s conference it appeared that Ghanaian homosexuals no longer posed an immediate threat to the nation.

There is no gainsaying the fact that the government and religious institutions' response appealed to the homophobic sentiment of the Ghanaian public.⁽⁹⁾ But it appears that some other commentators to these debates felt that the government and religious institutions should be blamed for the ineffective policing of social and moral decadence, such as homosexuality and prostitution. Although this notion of the ineptitude of authoritative bodies is very popular, one of the most comprehensive contributors to this issue, Nana Kofi Amankwah stated:

Churches, traditional rulers, and government are to be blamed for the gay and lesbian patronization in our country. Their presence in the country is disastrous for the core principle of the good name Ghanaians had enjoyed. The entire nation understands God's principles of reproduction to fulfill the purpose of our mission on this earth as man and women married and living together. Not man and man or woman and woman....⁽¹⁰⁾

Amankwah also stated:

The traditional leaders should realize that they have a constitutional obligation to continue the ideological legacy of our ancestors for the next generation. Tradition has no limits. Without tradition there is no innovation.... Tradition is an identification of a culture that determines who we are. As a result of this, these traditional leaders need to wake up from their slumber and stop this idiotic behavior from those South Africans that have the audacity to recruit, and others who has allow their facilities to be used for these satanic purpose....

The concomitant effect of the institutional condemnation of homosexuality was the creation of an atmosphere of fear towards and intimidation against homosexuals. The reactions of Ghanaian homosexuals (led by McDonald), as we shall see in the proceeding section, unveiled a counter-discourse to the popularly held idea of homosexuality and deviance.

DEFENDING SEXUAL CHOICE AND ORIENTATION: GALAG, THE GHANA STATE AND RELIGIOUS INSTITUTION

Polemics about the proposed homosexual solidarity conference oscillated like a pendulum, as McDonald challenged Kwamena Bartels and religious leaders. Overwhelmed by threats against gays and lesbians, McDonald asserted that, "There are hundreds and millions there who would not show their faces, because they know when they show it, this is the reaction they will get from Ghanaians" (Sawatzky, 2006). The leader of the GALAG appeared not to be intimidated by the name-calling, and threats by the government and religious bodies. Indeed, he had a tripartite battle to fight: (1) to demand reforms of

legal codes that criminalize homosexuality, (2) to establish sexual orientation as a human rights issue rather than a moral one, and (3) to challenge the notion of Ghana as a Christian nation and to appeal to Ghanaians to look at family structures and sexuality from a different angle.

But the most immediate battle that had to be fought was in the court of public opinion, and the media determined the extent of visibility given to the counter positions presented by the GALAG. Clearly the media, especially in print, saw the controversial homosexuality stories as a way of improving sales and readership. But the difficulty was in ensuring that the opponents of homosexuals did not see the media outlet as having a pro-homosexual viewpoint. The Ghanaian press, like most news outlets the world over, are conservative and tended to be pro-government in their coverage of the entire imbroglio.⁽¹¹⁾

GALAG and its leaders were aware that in order to make strides, it was imperative to get to the root of the debate by appealing to the moral and religious sense of Ghanaians. McDonald came up with an innovative strategy by raising some pertinent questions: What is the origin of the criminal code that criminalizes the so-called unnatural sexual behaviors? And he asked likewise whether the Bible was indigenous to Ghana. On matters relating to religion, he stated, as a Christian, he believed that some laws in the Bible were instituted for a specific period in history, and therefore, Christians should be open-minded about their interpretations. For example, McDonald made an argument that slavery was prevalent during the period of the Old Testament and the New Testament, but today slavery and servitude of all shades were despicable worldwide. The idea of the globalization of cultures also caught his attention. He asked the citizens to ponder the idea of the “authentic Ghanaian culture” as paradoxical, given the fact that individuals and groups over the course of Ghanaian history have adopted values, customs, and ideals that may have been extraneous to Ghana (Sawatzky, 2006).

McDonald’s attack on the secular posture of the Ghanaian state was compelling. He wondered why a modern democratic state should use the Bible as a means of deliberating on issues closely connected to a religiously pluralistic society’s social and sexual experience and existence. Additionally, he described both the legal code and the Christian Bible as part of the ideological package that the Ghanaians inherited from colonial masters. McDonald did not end there. He charged that since Europeans and North Americans have embraced homosexuality and ordained some gay and lesbian church ministers, Ghanaians should also be receptive to this kind of development.

The GALAG President also expressed criticism of those who employed elements of legal codes, and those who held on to cultural factors. He touched on a sensitive subject embedded in Ghanaian cultural norms and traditions, and challenged the collective assertions that homosexuality was an imported sexual identity from the West. McDonald explained that the traditional Ghanaian culture did not include eating at modern restaurants, wearing suits, or driving a car (Amoako, 2006). Indeed, the GALAG’s view as espoused by McDonald, expresses a salient argument about modernity and acculturation. As in many

other cultures, Ghanaian cultures have also been permeated and influenced by foreign values, norms and cultures. In fact, it would be difficult to locate many elements in Ghanaian cultures that speak otherwise (Amoako, 2006).

One of the issues that characterized the discussions about homosexuality during the debate that began with the announcement of the international conference on homosexuality was whether it had its origins in Ghana. Is homosexuality an old sexual tradition in Ghana or is it a new phenomenon? A clearer identification of its origin will enable us to properly trace how this issue has been dealt with in the past, and why it remains a contentious issue in the socio-cultural debate. McDonald and the GALAG members had a simple answer to its origin in Ghana. They claimed that Ghanaians were naïve, because people have always engaged in same-sex relations, despite the rigid norms that perceived homosexuality as a cultural taboo. To make a stronger case about the presence of alternative sexual lifestyles in Ghana, the GALAG posted dialogue and experiences of gays and lesbians in Ghana on their website in order to educate the Ghanaian public.⁽¹²⁾

The crisis in Ghana gained international attention as supporters from South Africa, Asia and the International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission expressed solidarity with the GALAG. They criticized Minister for Information and National Orientation Bartels, religious leaders, and the Ghanaian media for being homophobic and for exacerbating the controversy. While some international groups called for a boycott of Ghanaian goods and products in the international market, others sent petitions to the President of Ghana, John A. Kuffor, during his tour of Europe to canvass foreign investments in Ghana. One of the petitions from a gay rights group in England read:

Ghana's continuing criminalization of homosexuality is a relic of colonialism. The British colonial administrators imposed this anti-gay law on the people of Ghana in the nineteenth century. It sets Ghanaians against Ghanaians, undermining national unity and dividing people against each other. The prohibition of consenting adult same-sex relations violates the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, which enshrines the principles of equal rights and non-discrimination for all human beings.⁽¹³⁾

The group also wanted the Ghanaian President to follow the footsteps of Nelson Mandela, the former South African President, who supported gays and lesbians after the demise of Apartheid. Finally, human rights lobbyists wanted Kuffor to follow in the footsteps of Kofi Annan, a Ghanaian statesman and former Secretary General of the United Nations, who endorsed spousal benefits for employees of the world body including same-sex couples.⁽¹⁴⁾

Ironically, considering the intensity of homophobia in Ghana, violence against gays and lesbians is not as common when compared to the situation in Zimbabwe, Namibia and Kenya, or in Europe and North America. Violence remains

rare, because most homosexuals are neither vocal nor publicly forthcoming about their sexuality. However, *The Chronicle* reported threats against homosexuals who congregated in Suhum and Koforidua in the eastern region of Ghana soon after McDonald made his first public announcement in August 2006 (Quaye, 2006). Similarly, reports on some international gay and lesbian websites revealed that threats on McDonald's life were so intense that he was forced to leave Ghana temporarily to an undisclosed location in West Africa (Quaye, 2006). Although reports of physical violence against gays may be low, the impending threat of violence may be conceived as a constant.

The relationship between the media and homosexuals was paradoxical. On the one hand, homosexuals accused newspapers such as *The Chronicle* and radio stations on many occasions of engaging in propaganda. On the other hand, the media offered an avenue for disseminating news about the debate and allowing discrimination against gays and lesbians to be visible. For instance, *The Daily Graphic*, a leading government newspaper, reported that four people were each jailed for a two-year term for shipping magazines and materials that showed gays and lesbians in explicitly sexual positions in 2003.⁽¹⁵⁾ Although the GALAG generally perceived the media and religious institutions as pro-government, the Ghanaian press played a significant role throughout the crisis by capturing the voices of both support and dissent, and making such views accessible to a wider public. They created a platform for Ghanaians and the rest of the world to express opposing views and to engage verbally with each other (*The Chronicle*, 2006). In many ways, the publication and broadcast of controversial ideas attest to the reality that opposing conceptions about sexuality do exist, not only abroad, but also within Ghana.

CONCLUSION

McDonald and the GALAG members were unsuccessful in lobbying the Ghanaian government to recognize the contradictions in the criminal code that criminalizes unnatural acts. The GALAG's insistence that one's sexual choice/orientation should be treated as a human rights issue rather than a religious or cultural issue remains un-entertained in the Ghanaian context. Without any doubt, the GALAG will have to make a more concerted effort in order to appeal to the group of influential conservative Ghanaians who made their opinions known through electronic and print media, and who believed that tolerating the voices of the homosexuals or allocating a degree of sexual freedom to them was tantamount to the desecration of the Ghanaian tradition of family, its religious treasure, and the international reputation conceived over the last fifty years.

Although fervent appeals by the GALAG and international gay rights activists and advocates have not gained considerable currency in Ghanaians political arena, gays and lesbians have managed to defend their sexuality or educate Ghanaians about their sexual convictions. They continue to use information outlets, especially the Internet, to share their story with the Ghanaian society and

the world at large. In the midst of this highly charged debate in which overt and covert intimidation by the opponents of same-sex unions continues against the gays and lesbians, the GALAG has continued to seek new ways to galvanize support for their political and social agenda.

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NOTES

- (1) A statement attributed to a caller during a radio talk show on Joy FM of Accra, Ghana on August 31, 2006.
- (2) Interviews were conducted at University of Ghana, Legon.
- (3) Mugabe's ill-fitting suit of moral outrage. *The Independent* (London), Aug 27, 1995. Online. http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qn4158/is_19950827/ai_n14002832 (Accessed on November 15, 2008).
- (4) *Ibid.* 13.
- (5) Uganda: Arrests Of Gay Men Have Begun. Online. <http://www.iglhrc.org/cgi-bin/iowa/article/takeaction/resourcecenter/125.html> (Accessed on February 1 2009).
- (6) Personal communication with Aboke of Ibadan, Chief (Dr.) Ifasola Ifamapowa, June 13, 2008.
- (7) Gay Tour Ghana (Column "Legal wise"). Online. <http://www.geocities.com/gaytoughana/> (Accessed on July 10, 2007).
- (8) Ghana: Media Leads Anti-Gay Witch-hunt - Article no.14. *GlobalGayz.com*. Online. <http://www.globalgayz.com/ghana-news.html#article7> (Accessed on July 15, 2007).
- (9) This conclusion is based on the numerous reactions of the people and the government to homosexual rights. A comprehensive list of these reports can be found at <http://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/dossier.php?ID=120> (Accessed on March 1, 2009). For the counter-positions held by homosexuals see various articles in <http://www.geocities.com/gayghana/> (Accessed on March 2, 2009).
- (10) Blame Govt., Churches and traditional leader for gays and lesbian in Ghana. Online. <http://www.ghanaweb.net/GhanaHomePage//features/artikel.php?ID=124595&comment=0> (Accessed on July 21, 2007).
- (11) See all the fourteen articles in this link, *Gay Ghana News & Reports 2007-08*. Online. <http://www.globalgayz.com/ghana-news.html#article7> (Accessed on August 20, 2007).
- (12) See *Gays and Lesbian Association of Ghana*. Online. <http://www.geocities.com/gayghana/> (Accessed on July 12, 2007).
- (13) Outrage! Calls for the Decriminalisation of Homosexuality in Ghana. *UK Gay News*. Online. <http://www.ukgaynews.org.uk/Archive/07/March/1303.htm> (Accessed on February 1, 2009).

- (14) Ibid.
- (15) Four Gay Men Jailed. Sodomy Laws. Online.
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VISITING PATTERNS OF TWO SEDENTARIZED CENTRAL AFRICAN HUNTER-GATHERERS: COMPARISON OF THE BABONGO IN GABON AND THE BAKA IN CAMEROON

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ABSTRACT Many groups of central African hunter-gatherers called Pygmies have sedentarized recently. They sometimes suffer discrimination by their neighboring farmers, because of general indifference from the governments, and because they do not adopt the modern state system. However, a different situation is seen among a group of the Babongo Pygmies in southern Gabon. The social disparity between the Babongo and their neighboring farmers is rather small. A comparison of the visiting patterns of the Babongo and the Baka in southeastern Cameroon demonstrated that (1) the Babongo and their neighboring farmers visited mutually while the Baka and their neighboring farmers did not, and (2) the Babongo visited the town frequently but not the Baka. Political, economic, and social situations in southern Gabon make the Babongo unique among the Pygmies, in that they have come to participate in the modern social system.

Key Words: Babongo; Baka; Pygmies; Sedentarization; Visiting patterns.

INTRODUCTION

There are several groups of hunter-gatherers, generally called “Pygmies”,⁽¹⁾ who have adopted a nomadic lifestyle in the central African rainforests (Turnbull, 1961). One of the characteristics of their nomadic lifestyle is fluidity in the membership of residential groups, in flux with the distribution of natural resources and the social situation.

Pygmies establish long-term, mutually dependent symbiotic relationships with farmers based upon economic exchanges, fictive kinships, shared ceremonies, and/or friendships (Joiris, 2003; Rupp, 2003; Terashima, 1998). In these relationships, Pygmies are generally absorbed into the social systems of the farmers with whom they become strongly linked (Grinker, 1994; Takeuchi, 2001), because of their flexible social systems and immediate return economies (Woodburn, 1982). Therefore, the relationships are often ambivalent in that the Pygmies and the farmers are mutually dependent on the one hand, but the Pygmies are socially distinguished from farmers on the other (Takeuchi, 2001). However, the competition for natural resources between the Pygmies and farmers has not been serious because of the great differences in residence and mode of life. When social conflict arises, Pygmies with the nomadic lifestyle could avoid it by migrating to other camps. If there was discrimination against Pygmies from farmers, it was latent.

Recent studies on the Baka in Congo and Cameroon and the Babongo in

Gabon showed that they now live sedentarily along the roadside (Kitanishi, 2006; Knight, 2003; Matsuura, 2006; Sato, 1992). Their membership in residential groups has become more stable in the sedentary lifestyle. One reason for the sedentarization by the Pygmies is the implementation of sedentary policies by the governments in the 20th century. Although these policies aimed to provide local people with health care, education, and other services, they actually facilitated tax collection and control of the local people. In the name of civilization and development for the “backward” peoples, the Pygmies were forced to adopt a sedentary lifestyle and to participate in the modern state system (Kenrick, 2005; Knight, 2003; Lewis, 2005). Infiltration of monetary economies, increases in the gun hunting and bush meat trades, and the construction of roads and railways have also influenced the sedentarization of Pygmies (Bahuchet & Guillaume, 1982; Knight, 2003; Sato, 1992).

After Pygmies settled and the membership of residential group became relatively stable, the communication between Pygmies and farmers has increased while their lifestyle differences have decreased. According to a study on the Aka Pygmies in Central African Republic, the sedentary Aka had a wider circle of acquaintances among the neighboring farmers and more frequently engaged in labor for farmers, such as hunting for bush meat and working in plantations, than the nomadic Aka (Hewlett et al., 1982). Modern state systems such as school education, elections, and local administration, also infiltrated the sedentarized Pygmy societies. However, the modern systems are not accommodating of the lifestyle of Pygmies, and the Pygmies find it difficult to adapt to the modern systems due to the lack of a rigid social system within their society. As a result, neighboring farmers who have embraced the modern systems often become more dominant than the Pygmies (Ichikawa, 2001: 27-28; Lewis, 2005). According to a study on the Bagyeli Pygmies in southwestern Cameroon, some group of Bagyeli who once sedentarized in the 1960s returned to the forest camps to avoid social conflicts with the farmers (Biesbrouck, 1999).

In the 1970s and 1980s, as concessions for logging and mining in the forests increased, exploitation of natural resources by the European companies expanded into the local communities. After about a decade, conservation programs led by foreign NGOs came to the local communities, comprising many international opinions on how to conserve the tropical forests. Because both of these operations usually communicated only with the farmers and ignored the Pygmies, although their traditional lifestyle is ironically more firmly bonded with the forests, the domination by the farmers and the marginalization of Pygmies intensified (Kenrick, 2005; Knight, 2003; Lewis, 2005).

As shown above, the discrimination against the Pygmies from farmers has spread widely in the process of Pygmy sedentarization and interaction with the modern state. It is reported that a logging company and a conservation project precipitated a conflict between the farmers and the Baka in southeastern Cameroon (Hattori, 2008). When the logging company paid out compensation for the local community, the farmers obtained ten times more money than the Baka. The members of a conservation project committee for the management of natu-

ral resources were composed mainly of farmers. When environmental education was started in the village, the Baka did not show much interest, and only looked on from outside while the farmers earnestly discussed the conservation project (Hattori, 2008).

However, discrimination is not seen against all the sedentarized Pygmy societies. According to my previous studies, highly sedentarized groups of the Babongo Pygmies in southern Gabon are not dominated by nor employed by the Massango farmers, and intermarriage between the Babongo and Massango occurs not only between the Massango men and Babongo women but also between the Babongo men and Massango women (Matsuura, 2006). In the rituals, both Babongo and Massango participate in and play equally significant roles, and they share the same ritual norms (Matsuura, 2007). I observed that the Babongo participated in political meetings in the village with the Massango, and that they both worked together to solve problems. There appears to be less social disparity between the Babongo and Massango, compared to other Pygmy-farmer relationships.

To demonstrate the characteristics of the Babongo's interethnic relationships with the Massango, I examined the visiting patterns comprised of visiting activities and personal experiences of trips and compared them with those of the Baka in southeastern Cameroon, because visiting is a basic daily activity in which social relationships can be clearly viewed (Sugawara, 1988; Hitchcock, 1982; 2004). Based on the literature that Pygmy-farmer relationships have changed in the process of Pygmies' sedentarization, I will focus on the two highly sedentarized groups of Babongo and Baka. By comparing the visiting patterns of the sedentary Babongo and Baka, I will point out the differences between them, and discuss how the Babongo are less discriminated against by the Massango.

RESEARCH SITES AND SUBJECTS

I. The Babongo

I conducted field research in Département de l'Ogoulou, Province de la Ngounié in southern Gabon (Fig.1) for nine months in total (July to October 2003, November 2004 to February 2005, and May to August 2005). The dry season is from July to September in this region. Villages are located at intervals of 5-10km along the road and inhabited by the Babongo Pygmies and the Bantu farmers called the Massango. The Babongo build rectangular huts similar to those of the Massango, and many live without spatial separation from Massango in the same village. Although the Babongo sometimes visit other villages or forest camps, they spend about 80% of days in their village (Matsuura, 2006).

Agricultural products are the most important source of calories for the Babongo. They cultivate cassava as well as plantain, maize, banana, and pea-



Fig. 1. Research site in Gabon

nuts in their own fields. There are sufficient agricultural foods from their fields without having to exchange something for such food with the Massango. Hunting, gathering, and fishing in the forest also provide protein and fat intakes. The Babongo usually go hunting, gathering and fishing for a day, but sometimes stay overnight at forest camps for these activities. Camping is carried out by groups of 1-4 families averaging 9.1 persons for a short period of 1-7 days, averaging 3.2 days (Matsuura, 2006).

The Babongo have adopted the matrilineal and patrilocal social system of the Massango and share a language, clanship, and other rituals of Massango origin (Matsuura, 2006; 2007). Since the Babongo and Massango both have a matrilineal social system, I regarded the children of intermarriage as belonging to the mother's ethnic group.⁽²⁾

The research village is Boutoumbi, located along the roadside approximately 50 km to the east of the departmental capital, Mimongo. Because the Boutoumbi inhabitants usually communicate with the people of the closest and the next closest villages along the road, I call all these four villages the "neighboring villages." Although there are 100-200 inhabitants composed of both the Babongo and Massango in the neighboring villages, Boutoumbi Village is composed only of the Babongo and has a small population of about 30 inhabitants (Table.1).

According to my interviews, Boutoumbi Village had been composed of both the Babongo and Massango, but then was integrated to the adjacent village, Moukandi by the Gabonese regroupment policy in the 1960s. When there were conflicts among the Babongo in Moukandi Village, those Babongo originally

Table 1. Reseach villages in Gabon

Village name	Distance from Boutoumbi (km)	Resident composition	Population*	
			Babongo	Massango
Diyanga	19	Babongo, Massango	70	100
Dibamba	10	Babongo, Massango	50	50
Boutoumbi	-	Babongo only	30	-
Moukandi	5	Babongo, Massango	100	100
Mounongo	11	Babongo, Massango	?	?
Total			250+	250+

*Estimated from the electoral list and number of houses.

from Boutoumbi Village returned to their former village. As a result, Boutoumbi has become a unique village that has a small population. From then on, the village is composed only of the Babongo. Because of its small population and composition, Boutoumbi Village is convenient for me to compare with the Baka I describe below who live in small-sized settlements independently from their neighboring farmers. Although Boutoumbi Village may be unique in terms of the population and composition, the Babongo in Boutoumbi Village do not differ from those of any other Babongo in lifestyle, use of natural resources, and the skill in traditional healing practices.⁽³⁾

II. The Baka

I conducted field research on the Baka Pygmies at Koumela Village in Département de Boumba-et-Ngoko, Province de l'Est in southeastern Cameroon (Fig.2) for two months during the rainy season (March to May 2005). Koumela is located on the road between the departmental capital, Yokadouma, and the sub-prefectural capital, Moloundou, and composed of 16 residential clusters along the road at intervals of 0.1-1km. I call the residential clusters constituting a village, "settlements." The population of one settlement is 20-250 persons. There are two ethnic groups, the Baka and their neighboring farmers, Bangando.

The Baka and the Bangando live separately, and none of the Baka lives in Bangando settlements other than the women who married Bangando men. Baka settlements are easily distinguished from the Bangando ones because they are small-sized and contain traditional semi-spherical, leaf-and-twig huts. Some Baka in this region spend 50% of their days at the village and remaining 20-50% of their days at the camps (Hattori, 2008; Yasuoka, 2006). They sometimes go on foraging expeditions for more than two months at a time in groups composed of most of the members in one settlement (Yasuoka, 2006). In Koumela Village, I observed that some Baka spent about four weeks at the farming camp, but many Baka stayed in their settlements most of the time. There were some Baka, especially young men in their twenties and thirties, who were absent during my entire research period, because they were away working in the base camps of foreign sports hunting companies or logging companies.

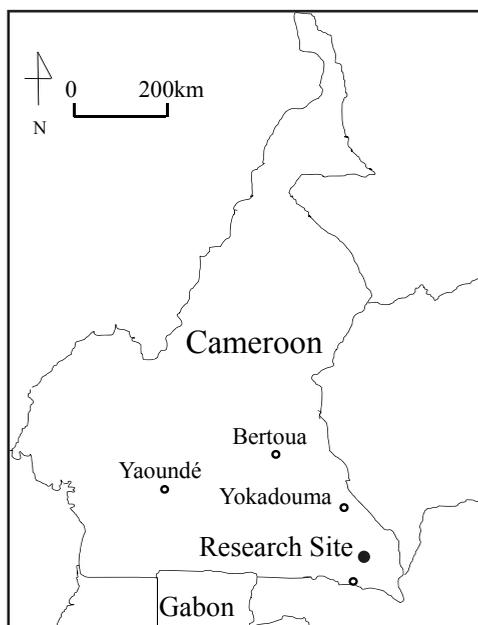


Fig. 2. Research site in Cameroon

Table 2. Research settlements in Cameroon

No.*	Settlement name	Distance from Koumela centre (km)	Population**	
			Baka	Bangandou
BK1	Dissassui	5	151	-
BG1	Sékopana	4.5	3	50
BK2	(next to Bélinguèngui)	3.5	19	-
BG2	Bélinguèngui	3	-	50
BK3	Paka	2.8	31	-
BG3	(No name)	2.5	-	20
BK4	Sépa	2	79	-
BK5	(next to Koumela centre)	0.2	21	-
BG4	Koumela centre	-	-	250
BK6	Soukambo	1	29	-
BK7	Vétééné	1.1	19	-
BK8	Sawi	2	35	-
BK9	Milieu	2.2	24	-
BG5	Mboli	2.5	-	50
BK10	Mbanda	3	34	-
BK11	Bonbola	4	28	-
Total			473	420

*BK: Baka settlements, BG: Bangando settlements.

**Baka population interviewed, and Bangando population estimated from the number of houses.

The Baka use their original language among themselves while they communicate with the Bangando in the Bangando language. The Baka frequently work for the Bangando in return for money, alcoholic drinks, cloths, and other goods (Matsuura, 2006). Since both the Baka and the Bangando have a patrilineal social system, I regarded the children of intermarriage as belonging to the father's ethnic group. The location and population of the research settlements are shown in Table 2.

METHODS

I. Visiting Activities

I defined visitors as the people who do not have houses⁽⁴⁾ in my research village or settlement.⁽⁵⁾

There are two types of visiting activities: visiting for the day, and visiting to stay more than one day. Because the villages are located along the roadside, many people pass through even if they do not intend to visit. Therefore, I focus only on visits to stay more than one day in this article.⁽⁶⁾ I observed the visiting activities, and recorded visitor composition including children. Visitors were classified into age-classes: age 3-10 as "child," 10-20 as "adolescent," and over 20 as "adult." Married persons under 20 years of age were included in the "adult" age-class. I distinguished the visitors who have parents or children in the village where they visited from other visitors, as "family visitors" here. If spouses and/or children accompanied the "family visitors," I classified them also as "family visitors."

I interviewed the visitors about the purpose of their visit. In Gabon, I collected samples of the visiting activities in Boutoumbi in the following three periods, 223 days in total: (1) 83 days (1 August to 22 October 2003), (2) 69 days (1 December 2004 to 11 February 2005, excluding 18 to 21 December 2004),⁽⁷⁾ and (3) 71 days (26 May to 4 August 2005). In cases that I was absent from Boutoumbi, away in town or forest camps during these periods, I later asked the Boutoumbi inhabitants whether there were visitors during my absence.

I collected samples of the visiting activities in six Baka settlements (Table 2: BK6-BK11) in Koumela Village for 40 days from 30 March to 8 May 2005.

II. Personal Experiences of Trips

I interviewed the Babongo and Baka adults about their personal experiences of trips. For comparison, I also interviewed the Massango and Bangando adults. In the interview, I quoted several major towns and asked whether the interviewees had ever been there. If they had, I inquired the purpose, visitor composition, and length of time. The number of people interviewed is shown in Table 3. The Babongo, Massango and Baka samples are not biased, but the Bangando

Table 3. Personal experiences of trips by ethnicity and sex

Country	Ethnic Group	Male	Female	Total
Gabon	Babongo	13	15	28
	Massango	20	19	39
Cameroon	Baka	47	55	102
	Bangando	7	1	8

samples are small, and biased to male samples.

I asked the Babongo and the Massango in Gabon whether they had ever visited the following towns (see Fig. 1): Mimongo, the departmental capital located approximately 50km from Boutoumbi, Mouila, the provincial capital 150km from Boutoumbi, and Libreville, the Gabonese capital 450km from Boutoumbi. I also asked the Baka and Bangando in Cameroon about the following towns (see Fig. 2): Moloundou, the sub-prefectural capital located approximately 60km from Koumela, Yokadouma, the departmental capital located 150km from Koumela, and Bertoua, the provincial capital located 450km from Koumela. I classified the personal experiences of trips into three categories: visited more than three times, visited once to three times, and never visited. I classified the examples of “visited less than three times but stayed for more than one month” as “having visited more than three times” because of the long length of the stay.

RESULTS

I. Visiting Activities

1. Visitors to the Babongo village

I observed 136 visitors (63 males and 73 females) in Boutoumbi during three periods for 223 days in total. The visitors were composed of 79 Babongo (31 males and 48 females), 44 Massango (26 males and 18 females) and 13 people of other ethnic groups (6 males and 7 females). I did not observe visits by children by themselves or by a group of children with no accompanying adolescent or adult. The number and sex composition of visitors of each age-class is shown in Table 4-1. There were 55 “family visitors” and 88 “other visitors.” The composition of “family” and “other” visitors is shown in Table 4-2.

(1) Family visitors

Sixty-one percent of Babongo visitors (48/79), 16% of Massango visitors (7/44), and 40% of total visitors (55/136) were family visitors (Table 4-2). There was a significant difference in the sex composition between the Babongo visitors (12 males vs. 36 females) and the Massango visitors (6 males vs. 1 female) ($p < 0.01$, Fisher’s exact test). Because some women who married out from Boutoumbi Village were included, there were more females than males among the Babongo. Twelve out of 36 female Babongo visitors were of Boutoumbi origin in their

Table 4-1. Number and sex composition of visitors to Boutoumbi by age-class

	Babongo			Massango		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Adult [%]	18 [58]	34 [70]	52 [66]	21 [81]	17 [94]	38 [86]
Adolescent [%]	5 [16]	7 [15]	12 [15]	2 [8]	1 [6]	3 [7]
Child [%]	8 [26]	7 [15]	15 [19]	3 [11]	0 [0]	3 [7]
Total	31 [100]	48 [100]	79 [100]	26 [100]	18 [100]	44 [100]

	Others		
	Male	Female	Total
Adult [%]	5 [83]	7 [0]	12 [92]
Adolescent [%]	1 [17]	0 [0]	1 [8]
Child [%]	0 [0]	0 [0]	0 [0]
Total	6 [100]	7 [100]	13 [100]

Table 4-2. Number and sex composition of “family” visitors and “other” visitors to Babongo village

	Babongo			Massango		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Family [%]	12 [39]	36 [75]	48 [61]	6 [23]	1 [6]	7 [16]
Other [%]	19 [61]	12 [25]	31 [39]	20 [77]	17 [94]	37 [84]
Total [%]	31 [100]	48 [100]	79 [100]	26 [100]	18 [100]	44 [100]

	Others		
	Male	Female	Total
Family [%]	0 [0]	0 [0]	0 [0]
Other [%]	6 [100]	7 [100]	13 [100]
Total [%]	6 [100]	7 [100]	13 [100]

teens to the thirties visiting their parents. Three female Babongo visitors were old widows living with their children or affines in other villages visiting their daughters who had married out. On the other hand, there were many more visiting male than female Massango, because some Massango men with Babongo wives from Boutoumbi Village sometimes accompanied their wives' visits. I give an example of a woman who has married out to the neighboring village, Moukandi in April 2005. During the 69 days from June to August 2005, she spent 20 days (including 12 days with her Massango husband) in Boutoumbi Village. This couple was also in a forest camp for ten days with the wife's relatives. I counted six cases where a Babongo wife and a Massango husband visited Boutoumbi Village, with two of the couples from a town called Mimongo. I identified marriages of eleven Babongo women in their twenties and thirties of Boutoumbi origin. Three out of these eleven women including two women above married out to town.

The women who had married out often brought their children on their visits. Some women visited with their husbands and children, whereas others visited only with their children, because their husbands were away for wage labor. Ten out of all 18 children visitors (Table 4-1) had mothers of Boutoumbi origin. In particular, seven Babongo children had Massango fathers and Babongo mothers of Boutoumbi origin. Although the children came with their mothers to Boutoumbi, they did not always stay over together. During their mothers' absence, the children were taken care of by their grandparents, uncles or aunts on the mother's side. Therefore, children tended to stay in Boutoumbi Village relatively longer than their mothers. The mean length of stay was 81.9 days for the children, and 55.3 days for their mothers. In summary, (1) women who had married out keep intimate relationships with the relatives after their marriage, (2) men visit their affines with their wives and establish new relationships, and (3) children are taken care of by their maternal relatives and form close bonds with them. Not only the Babongo but also Massango husbands visited and established relationships with their Babongo affines.

The mean length of stay of all family visitors (55 persons) was 40.8 days. The proportion of family visitors who came to Boutoumbi in all three research period was 24% (13 persons), in two periods 24% (13 persons), and in one period 52% (29 persons). Nearly half of family visitors came to Boutoumbi Village in different research periods. Forty-four percent of the family visitors (24 persons) stayed in Boutoumbi Village for a longer time than in their own village in at least one research period. When these visitors were in Boutoumbi Village, they worked in the field, cooked, and washed with their family.

(2) Other visitors

Sixty percent (81/136) of visitors were classified as "other visitors," comprising 31% of Babongo visitors (31/79), 84% (37/44) of Massango visitors, and 100% (13/13) of visitors of other ethnic groups (Table 4-2). Although these visitors had many purposes for the visits,⁽⁸⁾ I classified them according to the main purpose into four categories as follows: business, subsistence activities, rituals, and others. I examined the proportion of each category in Fig. 3, and describe the characteristics of visitors in the following section.

i) Business

There were some visitors who sought to enlist work from Boutoumbi inhabitants such as gun hunting, plant gathering, traditional healing, and traditional dance, in exchange for money or manufactured goods. All visitors of other ethnic groups (13/13) and 41% (15/37) of "other visitors" of Massango were on business. I demonstrated all examples of business visits in Table 5-1. Business visits for the day from June to August 2005 are also shown in Table 5-2.

Visitors for business purposes usually came in groups of 2-4 persons (avg. 2.4 persons) mainly composed of adults. Length of stay was 4.6 days on average and ten days maximum. Most of them came from town on private car or commercial transport. They were from the departmental capital, Mimongo, the pro-

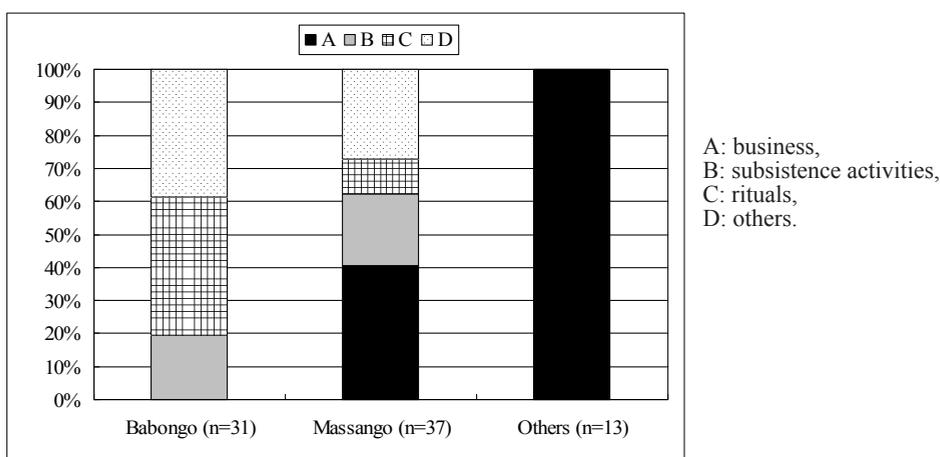


Fig. 3. Babongo and Massango visits and their purposes

Table 5-1. Business visits to Boutoumbi

No.	Period	Length of stay (days)	No. of visitors (male, female)		Ethnic group	Where the visitor came from	Business purpose
			adults	non-adults			
1	14-23 Aug. 2003	10	(0, 2)	(1, 0)	other (unknown)	town (Port-Gentil)	traditional healing
2	25-27 Aug. 2003	3	(1, 0)	0	Massango	town (Mimongo)	gun hunting
3	12-13 Sep. 2003	2	(1, 1)	(0, 1)	Massango	town (Mimongo)	traditional healing
4	11-19 Dec. 2004	10	(1, 2)	0	other (Punu)	town (Libreville)	traditional healing
5	4-5 Jan. 2005	2	(3, 0)	0	Massango	town (Libreville)	traditional healing
6	4-7 Feb. 2005	4	(2, 2)	0	Massango	town (Mimongo)	medical plants
7	4-8 Jun. 2005	5	(0, 1)*	0	Massango	village (Ndjolé)	traditional healing
8	11-17 Jun. 2005	6	(1, 0)	0	other (Fang)	town (Libreville)	traditional healing
9**	24-25 Jun. 2005	2	(1, 1)	0	Massango	town (Mimongo)	medical plants
10	28 Jun.-5 Jul.	8	(1, 1)	0	other (Vili)	town (Gamba)	traditional healing
11	3-4 Jul. 2005	2	(1, 2)***	(0, 1)	Massango	village (Mounongo)	traditional healing
12	24 Jul. 2005	1	(0, 2)	0	Massango	town (Libreville)	traditional healing
mean		4.6	2.4				

*Accompanied by a Babongo woman who has relatives in Boutoumbi.

** Visitor group No.6 had 2 members the same as group No.9.

*** Accompanied by a Babongo couple that have relatives in Boutoumbi.

Table 5-2. Examples of business visits to Boutoumbi (daytrips)

No.	Date	No. of visitors*	Ethnic group	Where the visitor came	Purpose
13	3 Jun. 2005	1	other (unknown)	town (Mouila)	gathering plants
14	3 Jun. 2005	3	Massango	town (Mimongo)	gun hunting
15	9 Jun. 2005	4	other (Nzébi)	town (Mouila)	traditional healing
16**	13 Jun. 2005	3	Massango	town (Mimongo)	gun hunting
17	7 Jul. 2005	2	Massango	town (Koulamoutou)	traditional healing

*All visitors are adult males.

**Visitor group No.14 had the same members as group No.16.

vincial capital, Mouila, and even from the Gabonese capital, Libreville. There were two cases where Massango visitors from neighboring villages (No. 7, No. 11) came on foot. They came with their Babongo friends who have relatives in Boutoumbi Villages.

Some visitors came repeatedly, and kept intimate relationships with the Boutoumbi inhabitants. Massango visitors No. 7 and No. 11 had kept ties with the Boutoumbi people for a long time. A female official of a local government and her associates (No. 6, No. 9) and a male shop manager and his associates (No. 14, No. 16) visited Boutoumbi Village twice during my research periods. They all said that they had long been acquaintances with the Boutoumbi inhabitants, and visited time after time. Although I observed them only once in my research periods, visitors No. 7 and No. 13 also said they visited regularly. Visitor No. 17 was sent to the village by the Finance Minister from this region who knew very well about the Boutoumbi inhabitants. Some visitors were able to establish new relationships with the Boutoumbi villagers through their visits. Visitor No. 10 promised to come again for another session of the traditional healing practice upon leaving Boutoumbi Village.

While visitors depended on the Babongo for their vast knowledge of natural resources and special skills in traditional healing practices, the Babongo also depended on visitors. They sometimes asked visitors for a ride to the shops or hospitals in town. Because some Babongo are especially skilled hunters, gatherers, and healers, it seems that the Babongo are regarded as people with special knowledge that other people do not have. And the Babongo embraced the importance of establishing close and continuous relationships with the people in town as well.

ii) Subsistence activities

Some people in neighboring villages own fields near Boutoumbi Village. In order to concentrate on farming, they stayed in Boutoumbi during the planting season. There were also some people who visited Boutoumbi Village for hunting and gathering in the forest camps with the Babongo. Among "other visitors," 19% (6/31) of the Babongo visitors and 22% (8/37) of the Massango visitors came to Boutoumbi Village for subsistence activities. Characteristics of these visitors were: (1) they visited with their family, and (2) they visited seasonally.

Here are some examples of visitors that I observed:

- a Babongo man in his forties who has an older sister in Boutoumbi Village, his wife, and their children visited from Moukandi.
- a Babongo man in his fifties who has a younger brother in Boutoumbi Village and his son in his twenties visited from Moukandi.
- a Massango couple in their sixties visited from Dibamba.
- a Massango woman in her forties and her daughter in her twenties visited from Moukandi.

The Babongo tended to visit in July (dry season) when the weather is suit-

able for traveling to hunting camps, and the Massango visited in December during the planting season. These visitors did not stay for successive days but went back and forth to their villages several times. They stayed for a few days to one month in total. In spite of the fact that visitors can come and return in a day because of the proximity of the neighboring villages, 1-2 hours on foot, they stayed for several days at Boutoumbi Village. The Babongo visitors had relatives in Boutoumbi Village, and were familiar with other Boutoumbi inhabitants. The Massango visitors also said that they had intimate and cooperative relationships with the Boutoumbi inhabitants for a long time.

iii) Rituals

Rituals are important social events at the research site. In particular, funerals are held frequently, because there are a series of funerals for one deceased at intervals of a few years. When a ritual was held, many visiting activities were observed. Forty-two percent (13/31) of “other visitors” of the Babongo, and 11% (4/37) of “other visitors” of the Massango, came to Boutoumbi Village for rituals. Some of them came to participate in the ritual held in Boutoumbi Village, and others came before or after a ritual in the neighboring villages. Characteristics of these visitors were: (1) they did not visit Boutoumbi Village for any other reason, and (2) they stayed for quite a short period. The mean days of stay were 2.2 days. These visitors were socially distant from the Boutoumbi inhabitants in spite of living in the neighboring villages. Not only the relatives or villagers of the same village as the ritual organizer but anyone belonging to the same ritual associations can participate in the rituals. In a previous article, I illustrated the initiation ritual in which more than a hundred people assembled in Boutoumbi Village (Matsuura, 2007). The rituals are events when the visitors and the villagers meet unfamiliar people and establish new social relationships.

iv) Others

Some people visited Boutoumbi Village only to see friends and/or relatives other than parents or children. I included them in this category.

2. Visiting Activities by the Babongo

Since I have already described the visiting activities by the Babongo in Boutoumbi Village in detail in a previous article (Matsuura, 2006), I give only an outline here. In many cases, the Babongo visit the neighboring villages to see their relatives and affines, including both Babongo and Massango, or to participate in rituals. They visit in groups of 1-3 member(s) to see their relatives and affines, while many people travel together (avg. 12.4 persons) to participate in rituals in the neighboring villages. In some ritual occasions, most of the Boutoumbi villagers went together. They stayed in their destinations for a short period (1-6 days) in both cases. The Babongo in Boutoumbi Village also visited the towns. As I mentioned above, they went to shops and hospitals in town such as the department capital, Mimongo. They went by car with their acquaintances or in vehicles that happened to pass by. In addition, they were sometimes brought into town for rituals and ceremonies organized by the govern-

ment or prominent personages.

Characteristics of the visiting activities by the Babongo from Boutoumbi Village are correlated with those of visitors to Boutoumbi Village. Namely, there are mutual visits to see their relatives and/or affines, and to participate in rituals between Boutoumbi Village and the neighboring villages. People from town visit Boutoumbi Village to enlist hunting-gathering members and traditional healing practitioners, while Boutoumbi villagers visit the towns to obtain manufactured goods and modern medicines, with rides requested from acquaintances or passing vehicles.

3. Visitors to Baka Settlements and Visiting Activities by the Baka

All visitors who stayed more than a day at the six Baka settlements (Table 2: BK6-BK11) were Baka (Table 6). Since there were no Bangando visitors during the 40 days in my research period, it could be said that the Bangando did not visit the Baka settlements to stay for more than a day. This is partly because the Bangando settlements are located quite near the Baka settlements. However, it is not only a matter of distance. Some Bangando said that they would never stay overnight at the Baka settlements. Even if they stopped in the Baka settlements to enlist labor, they went away soon after the negotiation. I observed a case where several Bangando visitors came to a Baka settlement for a singing and dancing ceremony. Although it lasted until the next morning, all of the Bangando returned to their settlements when the night came. On the other hand, when the Bangando came to visit from other regions, all stayed at the Bangando settlements. In addition to the residential separation of the two, the Bangando and the Baka are clearly distinguishable in terms of the characteristics of their visiting activities.

As for the Baka visitors, there were more females than males among adult visitors while there were no significant differences in the sex composition among children and adolescents. This is because couples rarely visited together. Most visitors were women who had married out whose husbands were working away from home or had already died. The proportion of “family visitors” was 73% (27/37). The mean length of stay of all visitors was 19.5 days, which accounts for nearly half of my research period (40 days). Twenty-two percent (8/37) of visitors stayed for the entire duration of my research period.

Table 6. Number, age-class and sex composition of visitors to six Baka settlements

Sex		Male [%]	Female [%]
Age-class	Adult	8 [53]	16 [73]
	Adolescent	4 [27]	4 [18]
	Child	3 [20]	2 [9]
Total		15 [100]	22 [100]

All visitors are Baka. They all visited and stayed in only one settlement, except for one female who visited two settlements during the research period.

Table 7. Visits to sports hunting and logging base camps by the Baka

Settlement	Soukambo	Véténé	Sawi	Milieu	Mbanda	Bonbola	Total
No. of visitors	12 [41.4%]	4 [21.1%]	10 [28.6%]	13 [54.2%]	12 [35.3%]	6 [21.4%]	57
Mean length of stay (days)*	23.5	29.3	21.6	28.2	19	25.2	23.9

[]: proportion of visitors to the total population.

*Total research period is 40 days.

I also examined the visiting activities by the Baka in six settlements. In addition to the neighboring settlements, they tended to visit base camps of foreign sports hunting companies or logging companies near Koumela Village (Table 7). There were two patterns: (1) visitors themselves worked for the companies and (2) visitors went to see their relatives who did. More than one fifth to a half of the residents in each settlement visited these base camps. The mean length of stay was 23.9 days, which was longer than half of my research period. As I mentioned, there are some Baka, especially young men in their twenties and thirties who were away in base camps during my entire research period.

In this region, the base camps of hunting and logging companies are quite important to visit, because they are rather close to the village and provide opportunities for employment. Unlike the Babongo, visiting activities to towns such as Moloundou and Yokadouma were not observed among the Baka.

Although I focused on visits that were longer than one day, I will add examples of visits for the day. The Baka visited the Bangando settlements frequently to look for small jobs in farming or housework. When there were opportunities, the Baka worked for about half a day to obtain crops, alcohol, and small change. The wages were 250 CFA francs, which can buy 0.5 liters of local spirit or 10 cigarettes, per day. They spent more than 10% of total hours for economic activities on small jobs.

II. PERSONAL EXPERIENCES OF TRIPS

My study of the visiting activities found that the Babongo established mutual and close relationships with people in towns, while the Baka did not. In order to verify this, I examined the personal experiences of trips. In Fig. 4, the Babongo had experienced more visits to town than the Baka had, slightly less than that of the Massango. Even considering the bias among the samples for the Bangando, the difference between the Babongo and Massango is less than that found between the Baka and Bangando. It may be because the Babongo have many relatives and acquaintances in towns. The Babongo have much more opportunities to visit towns in that sense, to see their relatives who are married there. They can also ask acquaintances who visit their village from towns to take them back into town. Since there are fewer cars that pass by my research site in Gabon, it is more difficult to move about in Gabon than in Cameroon in terms of traffic convenience. Despite this, the Babongo have had many opportunities to visit the towns because of the social networks established by

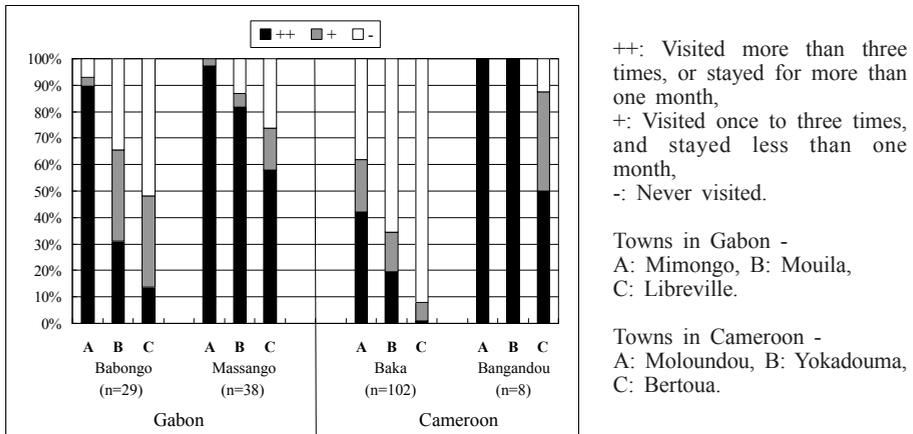


Fig. 4. Experience of visits to town

Table 8. Experiences and purposes of visits to the capital

Ethnic group	Babongo	Baka
Proportion of persons who experienced visits to the capital	50% (14/28)	4% (4/102)
No. of visits (person-trips)	36	4
Purposes for the visit (person-trip(s))	dance ceremony (16) to see family and friends (7) traditional healing (3) unknown (10)	wage labor (3) football match (1)

marriage and mutual visits.

In addition, opportunities to visit the towns are sometimes given to the Babongo in conjunction to national events or prominent personages. I went to Mouila with four Boutoumbi couples on August 17th, the Gabonese Independence Day, in 2003. We went on a government-hired car and stayed in a school arranged by the government as lodging for the occasion. After demonstrating their traditional dance at a parade, they stayed on for four days and were driven back to the village.⁽⁹⁾

Certainly, the Babongo also have occasions such as above and many other opportunities to visit the capital (Table 8). Half (14/28) of the Babongo informants had visited Libreville (36 person-trips). They visited for the purpose of participating in dance ceremonies (16 person-trips, three cases) and traditional healing practice sessions requested by the Finance Minister (3 person-trips, one case). They were sometimes brought into town by their relatives or acquaintances (7 person-trips). One Babongo woman had stayed in Libreville for several months in her youth. In contrast, only 4% (4/102) of the Baka informants

had ever been to the Cameroonian capital, Yaoundé (4 person-trips). They visited for the purpose of working (3 person-trips, three cases) and to play in a football match organized by a prominent personage (1 person-trip).

DISCUSSION

I analyzed the visiting activities and personal experiences of trips among two highly sedentarized groups of the Babongo and the Baka Pygmies. I compared the characteristics of their visiting patterns, and describe here the differences I found between them.

The common characteristic of the movement patterns between the Babongo and Baka is the importance of its social aspect. In both societies, visitors were composed mainly of family members who came repeatedly and stayed relatively long. According to a study on the Aka Pygmies around 1980 who had not much sedentarized, 40% of the purposes of trips made by the Aka were to visit relatives (Hewlett et al., 1982). The proportion of “family visitors” among the Babongo visitors (61%) and the Baka visitors (74%) is larger than that of the Aka visitors. Even among “other visitors,” there were some people who have relatives in my research villages. In addition, many visitors who do not have relatives in my research villages visited for the purpose of participating in social events such as rituals. For example, more than 40% of “other visitors” of the Babongo visited to participate in rituals, while 19% visited to engage in subsistence activities. When the Pygmy residence becomes fixed, and food resources are neither dispersed nor fluctuating, socially motivated visits have become more important than the ecologically motivated ones.

There are significant differences in the visiting patterns between the Babongo and Baka Pygmies such as visits by the neighboring farmers. Although the Bangando farmers sometimes stopped at Baka settlements to enlist labor, they went away immediately afterwards, while no Bangando farmer passed the night in Baka settlements. This was in great contrast to the Massango farmers who stayed in the Babongo village frequently. The Pygmies’ relation with the people in town is also different between the Babongo and Baka. There were some visitors to the Babongo village from the towns, while no one from a town came to the Baka settlements.

I suppose that it has become much easier to visit the neighboring villages and town for both the Babongo and Baka, due to sedentarization. In the Baka society, this tendency is seen in the visits to farmer settlements to work for the day or to the base camps of foreign sports hunting companies or logging companies near the village to look for longer employment. For the neighboring farmers and managers of these base camps, the Baka are available as a labor force for low wages or a few gifts.

According to the study of the Baka with a relatively nomadic lifestyle, the nomadic Baka used to live separately and independently from the farmers, because they practiced agriculture by themselves and could obtain much forest

products by hunting and gathering (Yasuoka, 2006). On the other hand, Hattori (2008) reported that the sedentarized Baka have become more dependent on farmers. She found that 94% of agricultural products and 62% of cash income of the Baka were obtained from trading with the farmers or day labor for them (Hattori, 2008). Because of such economic and political dependence, these Baka are socially discriminated against by the farmers (Hattori, 2008). Rupp (2003), who studied a village near my research site in Cameroon, emphasized the intimate aspect of interethnic relationships between the Baka and Bangando based on fictive kinships and/or friendships. However, she also pointed out the asymmetry in social power between them. It is usually the Baka who visit and provide labor for the Bangando. After work, they return to their settlements on the same day. The situation is similar to the cases at my research site.

As I showed above, wage labor in base camps of foreign sports hunting companies or logging companies is important for the Baka in my research site. Many Baka visited these base camps to work or to see their relatives working there. However, I suppose that the Baka cannot live on wage labor, because the wages are small and opportunities for labor are limited. The wages earned by the Baka are the cheapest among all laborers (Kitanishi, 2006). I have heard that the Baka complained about their small income and the difficult nature of their work upon returning to their village. Hattori (2008) also reported a case where a Baka felt antipathy against the Turkish manager of the sports hunting company because he had a menacing attitude. The Baka still have a lower social and economic status.

There are some Baka who keep partial economic autonomy from the farmers because they cultivate their own fields, the importance of cacao and coffee field labor has increased, and the logging companies have advanced further into the region (Kitanishi, 2006). Even among the cultivating Baka, it is also true that they experience disadvantages in their economic transactions, because they are peripheral in the market economy and the nation state (Kitanishi, 2006).

In contrast to the Baka, the Babongo visited the Massango in the neighboring villages and stayed there for several days. They also had more experiences visiting the towns than the Baka did. Since it takes more than a day to the towns and car transport is needed, it is difficult to go into town without any relatives or acquaintances there. As shown above, the Babongo women sometimes married the Massango in town. The Babongo relatives of these women are able to visit and stay in their house in town. The Massango and people of other ethnic groups from towns visited Babongo inhabitants, especially for business purposes. They helped the Babongo to visit the towns. Social networks including the neighboring farmers and townspeople have gradually extended into the Babongo society, because of intermarriage and mutual visits.

As I mentioned above, the sedentarization of the Pygmies was mostly due to the sedentary policies of the government, infiltration of monetary economies, and construction of the roads. Many previous studies demonstrated that the discrimination against the Pygmies by the farmers has not been unusual in the process of the Pygmies' participation in the nation state after their sedentariza-

tion (Kenrick, 2005; Lewis, 2005). This was also seen in the sedentary Baka societies that I studied. However, the Babongo Pygmies have established another type of interethnic relationship with the neighboring farmers despite the similar sedentarization process in Gabon (Knight, 2003; Matsuura, 2006). What makes their situations different? I have pointed out the political, economic and social factors in a previous article (Matsuura, 2006). Based on the results of the observation of the visiting patterns, I augment this issue.

There were some political and economic personages such as a minister and a shop manager who were familiar with the Babongo. They depended on the Babongo knowledge of natural resources and skill in the traditional healing practices. These people sometimes visited the Babongo village to enlist their skills. There were also some cases where the Babongo were taken into town to conduct healing practices. In addition, national political events worked to make some Babongo's visits into town possible, when the Babongo were invited to demonstrate their traditional dance at events such as at the independence ceremony.

It is unclear whether all of the Babongo in Gabon can obtain such social status through their knowledge and skill. However, some notable Gabonese people have solicited the Pygmy's knowledge on magic and divination in resolving their societal contradictions. Ngolet (2000) pointed out that the former Gabonese president who has died in June 2009, Omar Bongo, a member of the Batéké ethnic group perceived by the populace as being Pygmies, established his political domination owing to the Pygmy perception of mystical individual, a man capable of seeing the invisible and detecting the undetectable, in other words, a providential being. It is said that the Gabonese political situation may influence the social status of the Babongo.

It is also possible that the economic situation at my research site located in the mountainous hinterland is also related. The population density around Boutoumbi Village in Gabon (21 persons per kilometer road between Diyanga and Moukandi) is lower than that of Koumela Village in Cameroon (100 persons per kilometer from Dissassui to Bonbola). Forest exploitation by a foreign company is not so extensive around Boutoumbi Village in Gabon, while there are many base camps of logging companies and sports hunting companies around Koumela Village in Cameroon. In the present study, I have shown that the Babongo of Boutoumbi Village did not visit the base camps of foreign companies⁽¹⁰⁾ while the Baka of Koumela did so frequently. In such economic circumstances, I assumed that there is less conflict between the economic exploitation and lives of the Babongo in Boutoumbi Village. According to the study on the Bagyeli Pygmies in southwestern Cameroon, a balanced relationship between the Bagyeli and the farmers were established when the Bagyeli were self-sufficient and lived in a small-sized village, while some Bagyeli escaped into the forest, faced with conflict over forest resources and land in a larger village (Van de Sandt, 1999).

In addition to these political and economic factors, the social systems of the Massango farmers contribute to the Babongo-Massango relationship. Because

western Bantu groups in southern Gabon including the Massango have matrilineal and patrilocal social systems, there is a lack of congruence between residence and lineage in their society. Therefore, clan alliance is more important than territoriality in traditional western Bantu societies in Gabon (Gray, 2002; Vansina, 1990). While the primacy of clan allegiance goes beyond the ethnic boundary (Gray, 2002; Mayer, 2002; Vansina, 1990), ethnic categories are less important among them and intermarriages have occurred frequently between different Bantu groups. Paul De Chaillu, a French explorer who traveled in southern Gabon reported that two different Bantu groups were “curiously” intermixed in a village connected by clan alliance and intermarriage (Du Chaillu, 1871; Pourtier, 1989).

On the other hand, one of the characteristics of the Pygmy societies is the fluidity of the membership in residential groups. Because of this membership fluidity, one person rarely holds authority. Although the Babongo have highly sedentarized, they maintain this fluidity and egalitarian aspect of Pygmy society. There is equitable food distribution, mutual help, and collective work in the Babongo societies today. In my observation of the visiting activities flexibility in residence and child care by family members were observed. Some “family visitors,” especially children, stayed for a relatively long span and visited several times.

Where the Massango, with the primacy of clan allegiance beyond ethnic boundary, and the Babongo, with an egalitarian society, came to live together and interact in the same village, it might have been possible to establish relatively equal relationships without much consideration of an ethnic boundary. I have already demonstrated their co-residence, frequent intermarriages, and equally organized ritual practices between the Babongo and the Massango in my previous articles as well (Matsuura, 2006; 2007). Concerning the visiting patterns, I observed that many Massango, including men who married Babongo women, visited the Babongo village with their children, and vice versa.

Analysis of the visiting patterns in this article showed that the social disparity between the Babongo and their neighboring farmers is rather small and that the Babongo have come to participate in the modern social system with little difficulty. However, it is necessary to understand the diversity and complexity of interethnic relationships (Hewlett, 1996; Rupp, 2003; Van de Sandt, 1999). It is difficult to simplify and generalize the interethnic relationship even between the Babongo and Massango as being equals. Intermarriages occur between the Massango male and Babongo female as well as between the Babongo male and Massango female, but the former cases are much more frequent than the latter (Matsuura, 2006). There are more Massango who are administrative chiefs and are wealthy. Although it is unique in the region, Boutoumbi Village, my research site in Gabon, is composed only of the Babongo. This fact indicates itself that there may exist a grave separation of the Babongo from the Massango. If unseen political and/or economic changes happen, it might be possible that the relationship between the Babongo and Massango may also change. Therefore, what I feel to be as important is to understand the Babongo-

Massango relationship on the basis of continuous and detailed research with much consideration to the diversity and complexity in temporal, spatial, and cultural contexts.

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NOTES

- (1) Although there is a controversy about the designation, I chose the well-known term, “Pygmies,” to indicate the several groups of central African hunter-gatherers who share some commonalities to distinguish them from their neighboring farmers. It is now difficult to regard them all as hunter-gatherers, because of the different levels in sedentarization and lifestyle changes as I will describe later.
- (2) However, because the ethnic identity is not simply decided by lineage systems, further discussion is needed for this issue.
- (3) A healer administers medical plants to the patients, and other people assist him in singing all night. There is one healer in Boutoumbi Village, and two in the neighboring villages.
- (4) Baka traditional huts (*mongulu*) are included in the count.
- (5) Children’s houses are defined as the same as their parents.’ There are some old widows who live in the houses left by their late husbands or constructed by their children. Thus the widows’ residences are defined as their late husbands’ or their children’s residences. The men who lived in their wives’ houses for bride services during my research period were regarded as residents in their wives’ villages or settlements.
- (6) There is also a methodological difficulty to record all visits for the day because of the large number of passers-by.
- (7) A male initiation ritual was held in this period, and many participants from the neighboring villages came to Boutoumbi (Matsuura, 2007). Since I participated in the ceremonies as a novice, I could not record the visitors.
- (8) For example, someone visits to see a friend and do some farming during the time a funeral ceremony takes place.
- (9) Because the Gabonese president visits two of the provincial capitals for the Independence Day ceremonies every year, he comes to Mouila every five years. During my fieldwork in 2008, I heard that some Boutoumbi villagers also traveled to Mouila.
- (10) However, there were some Babongo from the neighboring villages of Boutoumbi, who were in the base camps of logging companies several hundred kilometers away from the research site.

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FODDER PLANTS FOR CATTLE IN KALIRO DISTRICT, UGANDA

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ABSTRACT The need for cultivating cattle feed in Uganda's Kaliro District has become urgent because the natural grazing areas are rapidly declining. The aim of this study was to generate information that would lead to the development and cultivation of livestock feed in the farming system. The specific objectives were (1) to describe cattle husbandry practices and (2) to document the indigenous cattle fodder and browse species. Our results show that 95% of the Kaliro households rear cattle, but are keeping fewer heads because of low fodder availability. They are also tethering animals as a direct response to the declining area of natural pastures. The cattle of Kaliro commonly feed on 42 plant species, dominated by grass and herb species. These species according to the respondents are becoming scarce because pasturelands have been converted to crop agriculture and to settlement. Fodder is also reportedly scarce in the dry season. Results of this study suggest that a diversity of plant species is available in Kaliro District from which to select some to cultivate in the variety of niches around the farm. Thirty of the fodder species reported here have other uses besides their use as fodder for cattle for the community. This may make them especially easy to select for cultivation by farmers around the farm.

Key Words: Livestock husbandry; Ethnobotany; Uganda.

INTRODUCTION

In Uganda agriculture is the most important economic activity, accounting for 43% of the Gross Domestic Product (NEMA, 1998; MAAIF & MFPED, 2000; UNDP, 2007). The livestock sub-sector of agriculture contributes 17% of the total agricultural production and 5% of the national Gross Domestic Product. This sub-sector adds significantly to the national food security and nutritional balance, provides raw materials such as milk and meat for the agro-processing industry, foreign exchange from the export of hides and skins, farm-yard manure, and draught oxen power for crop production (NEMA, 1998; MAAIF & MFPED, 2000). Cattle are the preferred livestock in the household economy of Uganda, and the national herds are dominated by indigenous stock.

Livestock in Uganda, as in many other parts of the world, is grazed on natural grass-based communal pastures, in land use systems that include forests, woodlands and swamps, and fallow lands. Many of the pasturelands located in these land use systems are declining in area because of conversion of land to

crop agriculture and settlements (NEMA, 1998). Feeding of livestock in natural systems is therefore becoming a challenge and is partly limiting growth in the livestock sub-sector. It is necessary, therefore, to initiate interventions leading towards the active management on the farm of fodder or browse species that are exploited by cattle in traditional grazing systems.

The first step in this direction is to generate information that will assist in making management decisions for pasture improvement leading to improved production from cattle. Such information includes knowledge of which species are currently exploited as fodder and the livestock management system. The main objective of this study was to document (1) the general animal husbandry practices, and (2) the cattle fodder species known to the farmers of Kaliro District in Uganda, where cattle husbandry forms a vital part of the people's livelihood.

METHODS

I. Study Area

Kaliro District is located between 33°20'-33°38' E and 0°58'-1°18' N at an altitude of 1,052-1,098 m. It covers an area of ca. 870 km². The climate is generally hot and dry. Rainfall ranges between 1,195-1,357 mm and is bimodal, falling in March-June and August-October (Uganda Bureau of Statistics, 2000). The soils of Kaliro have low fertility. The most extensive soil type is the Mazimasa-complex of catenas derived from ancient lake deposits. This soil type is usually a shallow grey or brown sandy loam on laterite base rock (Department of Lands & Survey, 1962). The other types are mineral hydromorphic soils influenced by permanent or seasonal waterlogging and organic hydromorphic soils.

Kaliro has four major land use categories: non-uniform small-scale farmland (67.4%), wetlands (16.4%) dominated by *Cyperus papyrus*, woodlands (3.6%) dominated by *Albizia zygia*, *Combretum* spp., *Hyparrhenia rufa* association and *Albizia zygia*, *Combretum gueinzii*, *Brachiaria decumbens* association, and grasslands (2.6%) dominated by *Sorghastrum rigidifolium*. All other categories including bushlands take up less than 1% of the land area; the remainder of the area is open water (Langdale-Brown, 1959; Forest Department, 1997).

The district has an estimated population of more than 155,000 people and a population density of ca. 180 people/km² based on the population census of 1990 (Statistics Department, 1992). The average family size of a household is eight members (Tabuti, unpublished data). From the above data we estimate that there are 18,750 households in Kaliro. The people of Kaliro are known as the Balamogi and are an agricultural community who practice subsistence crop and livestock agriculture as the main sources of livelihood. Landholdings are small and fragmented into pieces, ranging from 1-3 ha per piece (Tabuti, unpublished data).

II. Data Collection

We employed an ethnobotanical approach to document traditional knowledge associated with livestock grazing and held by the local community of Kaliro District. Local people possess knowledge about useful plants species, how they are used, and their spatial and seasonal distributions in the ecosystem (Paterson et al., 1998; Etkin, 2002). Therefore, through ethnobotanical studies involving farmers, the most commonly grazed species for improving fodder can be identified (Paterson et al., 1998; Roothaert & Franzel, 2001).

Fieldwork for this study was carried out between June 2000 and June 2001. We used semi-structured interviews, guided questionnaires, and direct observations to collect the data. The study was conducted with the approval of the local administration, which agreed with the objectives, methods, and usefulness of the results of the study. The local political leaders assisted in gaining confidence and cooperation from the respondents. A small fee of UGX 5,000-30,000 (ca. USD 3-28) was paid to all respondents as a compensation for time spent answering our questions.

Household respondents were chosen using a stratified sampling strategy following administrative units as the units of strata. We selected at least one respondent from each of the villages of Kaliro District. In this way 126 household respondents were interviewed. We administered a questionnaire consisting of a mixture of open- and close-ended questions in face-to-face interviews. The questions were aimed at determining types of livestock reared in the district and how they are reared, who in the family does the rearing, the plant species grazed by cattle, and perceptions about fodder availability. Interviews were conducted in the local language (*KiLamogi*) and were supplemented by direct observations. Plant voucher specimens were collected and deposited at the Makerere University Herbarium.

Data from the field study was edited, and all incomplete responses treated as invalid and excluded from the analysis. Data was analyzed both qualitatively and quantitatively, and responses from open-ended questions were grouped into classes that expressed similar ideas. Percentages, based on valid responses only, were calculated from close-ended questions. All averages are based on the median, because the data did not follow a normal distribution (Zar, 1984).

RESULTS

I. General Characteristics of Animal Husbandry

Almost all respondents of Kaliro (95%) rear livestock. By extension a similar proportion of the households rear cattle. Cattle, goats and chicken comprise the main types of animal husbandry (Fig. 1a). A few households also keep pigs and sheep, but ducks and turkeys are seldom reared. Farmers keep low numbers of each livestock type, and on average have 4 heads of cattle, 4 goats and 3 pigs.

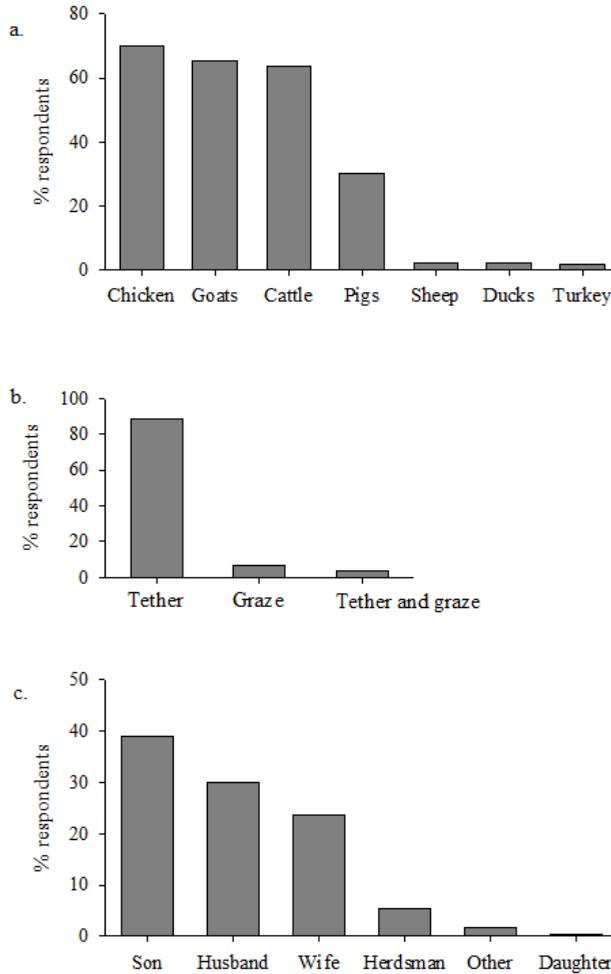


Fig. 1. Characteristics of animal husbandry in Kaliro District (n=126)

a: percentage of respondents rearing different livestock types;

b: percentage of respondents practicing different livestock husbandry types. Note that domestic birds are free ranging; and

c: percentage of different members of the household and 'abayi' participating in the rearing of animals. Included under others are the other members of the extended family and animal rearing groups.

It was not always possible to count poultry. From the estimated number of households living in Kaliro and the average number of cattle owned per household, we estimate that there are 75,000 heads of cattle in the district.

From participant observations and informal conversations we determined that cattle and other livestock are reared, essentially, for economic reasons, i.e. to earn income from the sale of meat, dairy products, and hides, and the sale of live animals. Some households keep oxen for their draught power. Livestock also feature highly in the cultural and social life of the Balamogi. Livestock

animals are killed during cultural rituals and local festivities such as weddings, burials, and last funeral rites.

Cows are tethered by most of the respondents (89.2%), and the rest of the farmers herd their livestock in communal grazing fields or practice both tethering and grazing (Fig. 1b). In the past, cattle were almost exclusively grazed. Tethering is a new phenomenon that has arisen as a response to pasture scarcities. Cattle are kept in fenced enclosures (*kilalo*) at night. The common grazing routine is to take cattle out to pasture early in the morning around 6 a.m. and bring them in at about 10 a.m. for milking, while the herdsman/farmer eats breakfast. Two hours later, they are returned to pasture until late evening around 7 p.m. They are milked once more in the evening. Goats and sheep are tethered in the home garden or fallow fields, and are rarely taken out to graze. Pigs are stabled or tethered, while, the domestic fowl are free-ranging.

All members of the family participate in rearing livestock. However, this activity is the primary work of the male members of the family, i.e. sons and husband, accounting for 74.2% (Fig. 1c). Some households hire professional herders (*abayi*) to help them herd their livestock. Other people form animal rearing groups and take turns to herd livestock.

II. Cattle fodder Species

Forty-two species of plants distributed in 37 genera and 15 families are commonly fed on by cattle in Kaliro. Four of the fodder species mentioned by the respondents were not found during the collection of specimens for identification, and remain unidentified. The majority of the fodder species are grasses (19). The other growth forms are: herbs (10), shrubs including lianas (6), trees (6), and one sedge. Family Poaceae contains the largest number of fodder species (19) followed by Fabaceae with four species, while Euphorbiaceae, Moraceae, and Asteraceae have three species each (Table 1). The genera with the highest number of fodder species is *Digitaria* with three species, followed by *Brachiaria*, *Ficus* and *Pennisetum* with two species each, and all the rest have one species each. We were told that cattle like to graze on *Panicum maximum*, and that when they graze on this plant their milk yield improves. Another plant, *Vernonia amygdalina* is preferred by cows when in calf. Almost all the fodder and browse species are native (36) apart from *Mangifera indica* that cattle feed on the fruit, *Bidens pilosa*, and *Euphorbia heterophylla* (Table 1). All the fodder species grow wild (41), except *Ficus natalensis* and *Mangifera indica* that are cultivated or are semi-wild. Cattle also feed on cultivated food plants, but these are not reported here.

The same species that are grazed or browsed by cattle also provide fodder for other livestock. Goats are known in the community as generalist feeders, and feed on more plants than cattle. No attempt was made to inventory fodder plant species for animals other than cattle because it was not the objective of this study, but farmers claimed that goats like to feed on *Panicum maximum*, *Brachiaria* spp., *Imperata cylindrica*, and pigs mainly on *Euphorbia hetero-*

Table 1. Fodder species reported by respondents of Kaliro District.

Family, species, local name, voucher number, (other uses)	Status	Form	Freq.
Acanthaceae			
<i>Asystasia schimperi</i> T. Anders., Nyante, JRST 414 (1,2)	W, I	H	1
Anacardiaceae			
<i>Mangifera indica</i> L., Muyembe, JRST 99 (2)	C, Int	T	1
Asclepiadaceae			
<i>Secamone africana</i> (Oliv.) Bullock, Nakasando, JRST 319 (3)	W, I	L	1
Asteraceae			
<i>Bidens pilosa</i> L., Kalala, JRST 456 (1)	W, Int	H	1
<i>Conyza bonariensis</i> (L.) Cronq., Kayala, JRST 457	W, Int	H	1
<i>Vernonia amygdalina</i> Delil, Lubilili, JRST 81 (1,2,4)	W, I	S	2
Combretaceae			
<i>Combretum collinum</i> subsp. <i>elgonense</i> (Exell) Okafor, Mikoola, JRST 58 (1,3,5)	W, I	T	6
Commelinaceae			
<i>Commelina benghalensis</i> L., Ilanda, JRST 16 (1,2)	W, I	H	2
Cyperaceae			
<i>Cyperus papyrus</i> L., Bitooko, NC (3)	W, I	Se	2
Euphorbiaceae			
<i>Acalypha bipartita</i> Muell. Arg., Helele, JRST 315 (1,2)	W, I	H/Ss	1
<i>Euphorbia heterophylla</i> L., Kafadanga (Dengu), JRST15 (1)	W, Int	H	17
<i>Flueggea virosa</i> (Willd.) Voigt, Lukandwa, JRST 43 (1)	W, I	S/T	1
Fabaceae - Faboideae			
<i>Indigofera arrecta</i> A. Rich., Byeyo, JRST 358 (1,7)	W, I	H	1
<i>Sesbania sesban</i> (L.) Merr., Kasilya silya, JRST 170	W, I	S/T	1
Fabaceae - Mimosoideae			
<i>Acacia hockii</i> De Wild., Kashiono, JRST 44 (1,5)	W, I	S/T	3
<i>Albizia zygia</i> (DC.) Macbr., Mulongo, JRST 261 (1,3,5)	W, I	T	10
Moraceae			
<i>Ficus natalensis</i> Hochst., Mukosi (1,3,5,6)	C, I	T	13
<i>Ficus</i> sp., Mutonto, JRST 467	W, I	T	1
<i>Milicia excelsa</i> (Welw.) C. Berg., JRST 500, Muvule (1,2,4)	W, I	T	2
Nyctaginaceae			
<i>Boerhavia diffusa</i> L., Jojokelo, JRST 11 (4)	W, Int	H	1
Pedaliaceae			
<i>Sesamum angustifolium</i> (Oliv.) Engl., Mugosegose, JRST 252 (1)	W, I	H	1
Poaceae			
<i>Brachiaria brizantha</i> (A. Rich.) Stapf, Kiryama, JRST 245	W, I	G	31
<i>Brachiaria decumbens</i> Stapf, Kilyama, JRST 130	W, I	G	31
<i>Cymbopogon nardus</i> (L.) Rendle, Ikungu, NC (1)	W, I	G	2
<i>Cynodon dactylon</i> (L.) Pers., Lufafa, JRST 46 (1)	W, I	G	59
<i>Dactyloctenium aegyptium</i> (L.) Willd., Bukuuku, JRST 216 (2)	W, I	G	6
<i>Digitaria abyssinica</i> (A. Rich.) Stapf, Lumbugu, JRST 128	W, I	G	43
<i>Digitaria longiflora</i> (Retz.) Pers., Kobyu, JRST 131	W, I	G	37
<i>Digitaria</i> sp., Sokonolye, JRST 132	W, I	G	1
<i>Echinochloa pyramidalis</i> (Lam.) Hitchc. & Chase, Kaheheile/(Kishi), JRST 39,168	W, I	G	4
<i>Hyparrhenia rufa</i> (Nees) Stapf, Museke, JRST 141 (3,7)	W, I	G	30

<i>Imperata cylindrica</i> (L.) P. Beauv. Lubembe, JRST 124 (1,3)	W, I	G	67
<i>Melinis repens</i> (Willd.) Zizka, Bukuuku, JRST 127	W, I	G	1
<i>Panicum maximum</i> Jacq., Bitinde/mikonzi, JRST 2 (1,7)	W, I	G	90
<i>Paspalum</i> sp. JRST 492 (7)	W, Int	G	17
<i>Pennisetum polystachion</i> (L.) Schult., Idulyenke, JRST 17 (1)	W, I	G	1
<i>Pennisetum purpureum</i> Schumach., Bigada, JRST 463 (3)	W, I	G	22
<i>Setaria megaphylla</i> (Steud.) Th.Dur. & Schinz, Kibwala, JRST 408	W, I	G	1
<i>Sporobolus pyramidalis</i> P. Beauv., Nakaselye, JRST 76(1,7)	W, I	G	45
<i>Vossia cuspidata</i> (Roxb.) Griff., Kishi/bisege, JRST 289	W, I	G	19
Simaroubaceae			
<i>Harrisonia abyssinica</i> Oliv., Lushaike, JRST 64(1,4)	W, I	S/T	1
Typhaceae			
<i>Typha domingensis</i> Pers. Musaala, NC (1,7)	W, I	H	2
Unidentified (local name only)			
Kafunge			3
Nende/nkoba gya Lyada			3
Bisibanyike			1
Kolokosimbo			1

* Frequency (Freq.) refers to number of respondents that mentioned the species to be edible to cattle. Information of uses other than fodder is also provided in the first column. C: cultivated, Freq.: frequency, G: grass, H: herb, H/Ss: herb/subshrub, I: indigenous, Int: introduced, L: liana, S/T: shrub/tree, Se: sedge, T: tree, W: wild.

Other uses: (1) Medicinal uses (Tabuti et al., 2003a), (2) Edible uses (Tabuti et al., 2004), (3) Construction use, (4) Veterinary medicine (Tabuti et al., 2003b), (5) Firewood use (Tabuti et al., 2003c), (6) Cultural use, (7) Miscellaneous uses.

phylla and *Boerhavia diffusa*. Poultry feed for the most part on crop cereals such as *Zea mays* and young plants at the seedling stage, e.g. *Phaseolus vulgaris*.

III. Farmers' Perceptions about Fodder Availability

According to the respondents, there are seasonal variations in fodder availability: fodder is abundant in the wet season, but becomes scarce in the dry season. The respondents reported that because of the abundant fodder in the wet season, the cattle are observed to attain a healthy look and gain weight. In the dry season, farmers herd their cattle, goats, and sheep to distant communal grazing fields or to lakeshore swamps. Even those farmers who normally rear animals by tethering turn to herding, while others feed their livestock on browse, i.e. branches and leaves of trees and shrubs, notably of the *Ficus* spp.

Overall, the respondents reported that it was becoming hard to find fodder for cattle because of reductions in grazing areas. Farmers attributed the decline in pastoral area to several causes: (1) conversion of communal grazing lands to agricultural use, (2) shortening of fallow periods or absence of fallowing, and (3) weed invasion. The allocation of more land to crop agriculture to increase agricultural production and the shortening of fallow periods by farmers has made animal herding difficult, because animals stray into crop fields to eat cultivated

crops, and this results in prosecution of the animal owners. The weed, *Hyptis suaveolens* (L.) Poit. (Lamiaceae) known as “Lukohe” has invaded pasturelands and out-competed favored fodder species. Farmers stated that low fodder availability has forced them to keep fewer cattle and tether the few that they possess.

At the end of the dry season, grass pastures are usually set on fire to stimulate new growth of grass. The new growth grass was reported to be palatable to cattle but was also known to make them diarrheic.

DISCUSSION

The general husbandry practices by the farmers of Kaliro District, such as the keeping of few heads of cattle, correspond with those observed for other farmers elsewhere in Uganda (UNDP, 2007). Similarly, the social functions of cattle among the local community of Kaliro confirm those observed in other parts of Uganda where cattle were valued as an economic asset and tool for agricultural production (NEMA, 1998; MAAIF & MFPED, 2000).

As has been observed elsewhere (NEMA, 1998), fodder/browse availability and access is becoming limited. The feeding of cattle in pastures has therefore become a problem. The response by farmers to this reduction in feed availability has been to keep fewer heads of cattle and to change their rearing patterns to tethering. In Uganda tethering is common with people rearing small herds of livestock, and also in areas of intensively cropped land (NEMA, 1998). Tethering as a livestock rearing system stops animals from straying and appears to be functional in areas where land is in short supply (IIRR, 1988).

Forty-two fodder species are reportedly exploited as fodder or as browse by cattle. The greater proportions of the grazed species are grasses and herbs. This diet may limit growth and yield of meat and milk from cattle, because some tropical grass species have relatively low contents of crude protein and some minerals, compared to browse species (Dzowela et al., 1997; Paterson et al., 1998; El Hassan et al., 2000; Ibewiro et al., 2000). In addition the growth of tropical grasses is limited by the dry season and droughts, resulting in decline in both their quantity and quality (Paterson et al., 1998). Woody species on the other hand are less affected by seasonal climatic changes because they possess a deep root system.

Twenty four of these species are widely exploited by livestock in other parts of Uganda (Mpairwe et al., 1998) and elsewhere in Africa, for example, Kenya (Roothaert & Paterson, 1997), Zimbabwe (Dzowela et al., 1997), Ethiopia (El Hassan et al., 2000), Nigeria (Ibewiro et al., 2000), Rwanda (Niang et al., 1998), Mozambique (Muir & Alage, 2001), and other parts of Africa (Burkill, 1997). A substantial amount of chemical and nutrition value data has been generated on some of these species (Dzowela et al., 1997; Paterson et al., 1998; El Hassan et al., 2000; Ibewiro et al., 2000). The species *Tithonia diversifolia* observed to be browsed by cattle in Kenya (Roothaert & Franzel, 2001) was not known to be grazed by cattle according to farmers of Kaliro District.

CONCLUSIONS

To counter the long term impact of declining fodder/browse feed for cattle, farmers should cultivate or protect browse species around the homestead, along hedge rows or other niches around the farm which do not compete with land uses on-farm. Candidate species may include species known to have many uses. According to Etkin (2002) and Paterson et al. (1998), species with many uses are more preferred by farmers and may, thus, be easier to adopt for the farmers. Thirty of the pasture species reported here have other uses besides being feed for cattle. They are used among the Balamogi as traditional medicines for both people and cattle, and as human food (Table 1). They are also used for construction, as firewood, in the cottage industry to make brooms, for example, and in cultural religio-medico rituals. The plants also provide fodder for livestock other than cattle. Leguminous species have the potential to improve soil quality by introducing nitrogen to the soil (e.g. Paterson et al., 1998; Ibewiro et al., 2000).

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