

Money and the Hadzabe

Perspectives of Hunter-Gatherers in Northern Tanzania



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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate what the Hadzabe hunter-gatherers of the Lake Eyasi basin in Northern Tanzania spend money on, and importantly, what they don't spend money on. The subjects of this study were a camp of 13 Hadzabe men and women, and the study was conducted between April 5, 2014 and April 25, 2014. Results were divided into six categories: food, shelter, clothing, medicine, education, and entertainment. The results of the study force us to question the necessity of money in the pursuit of happiness.

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Introduction

The Hazabe people are a group of hunter-gatherers that live in the Lake Eyasi basin in northern Tanzania. They are some of the last hunter-gatherers still around in Africa today, and were also some of the first people around on the planet Earth. Author and activist Daudi Peterson calls them the “original people” due to their early origins, and literature suggests that the Hadzabe have lived in the region “for at least 100,000 years, if not more”. (Peterson, viii) (UCRT) Indeed, the Hadzabe’s home is not far from man’s first known footprints, and the Hadzabe language is both a click language and a linguistic isolate, which suggests that “the Hadza language either developed independently from other click languages or it split off from them a long time ago”. (Marlowe, 17) (Peterson, vii) The Hadzabe way of life has been changing rapidly in recent years, but an analysis of their current lifestyle is still capable of yielding deep insight into an ancient and harmonious mode of existence. This unique perspective is one that we westerners stand to learn a lot from. Specifically, I believe we can learn from the Hadzabe’s relationship with money.

The Hadzabe people have a unique relationship with money. All that they need to survive comes from the land, not from the store. Their way of life is one in which using money is not a necessity, rather, it is a luxury. This is different from western society, where the thought that money is necessary for life is barely even questioned. Simple requisites like food and shelter are things that definitively cost money in the western world, and to even suggest that this could or should not be the case is to risk being pinned as idealistic or naïve. My study of what the Hadzabe spend money on, and importantly, what they don’t spend money on, forces us westerners to question our fundamental assumptions about the necessity of money.

This paper is divided into seven sections. This is the first section, the introduction, where I introduce who the Hadzabe are, lay out my study question, and give an overview of the format of the paper. The second section is about the area where the study was conducted, and provides useful information about the growing cultural tourism industry in the area and my rationale for choosing the study site that I did. Third is the methods section, where I lay out how the study was conducted in its entirety. The fourth section is the results section, where I start by introducing the individual members of the group that I stayed with, and then move into what I observed the Hadzabe spending (and not spending) money on by category. Next is the discussion

section, where I analyze the results and discuss what we can learn from the Hadzabe lifestyle, seen through the lens of what they spend money on and what they don't. The sixth section is the limitations and recommendations section, where I summarize what I could have done to improve the study, and give recommendations for future studies. The conclusion wraps up the paper, and the appendix contains transcripts of interviews and other primary data.

Study Area

The Hadzabe live in the Lake Eyasi basin in Northern Tanzania. *Appendix A* shows a map of the region and an estimation of lands that the Hadzabe currently inhabit. I chose to study a Hadzabe group in Mlango Moja, about a two to two and a half hour drive west from my home base at Kisima Ngeda, Mang'ola, and an hour or so walk from the shores of Lake Eyasi. There were several distinct reasons that I chose this area.

The biggest factor that influenced my choice of study site was the cultural tourism industry in the Lake Eyasi region. The Hadzabe are becoming the subjects of a growing cultural tourism industry, and understandably so. The thought of seeing the first people on Earth in action, living as they have for thousands of years, is sure to pull at any romantic's heartstrings. A smattering of local guides and beautiful accommodations have arisen to meet the demand created by tourists, and now with the internet, one can easily book an afternoon's visit to one of the many Hadzabe camps from the comfort of one's European, American, or Australian home. There are between 1000 and 1500 Hadzabe left in Tanzania, and few (if any) have been left untouched by missionaries, researchers, and tourists. The 2013 figures from the cultural tourism office in Lake Eyasi show that about 5930 tourists are coming through the area now each year. (LECTO) Despite this, the study site in Mlango Moja proved to be a good place to conduct the study due to the inhabitants' relative lack of interaction with the tourism industry, especially at the time of year that the study was conducted. April is normally a low-season for tourism, and the study participants lived fairly far from tourist accommodation. My local guide thought that this would be a good place for my study, and told me that tourists do not often visit this area because of its distance from tented camps and lodges. No tourists or researchers visited the Hadzabe group during my study.

The Hadzabe that I stayed with lived in an informal camp that had about 18 residents at the time the study was done. The residents were all either family, or friends of the family. Most of the time, everyone returned to this camp to sleep. Sometimes (like when hunting or partying), residents of the camp slept elsewhere. The Hadzabe typically pick up and move their camp every year or so. The camp where the study was conducted was located about a ten minute walk from one shop on a new road that connects Karatu and the Lake Victoria region. This shop was a gathering point for residents of the region, and a stopping point for travelers on the road. The air

temperature ranged from about 70°F at night to about 95°F in the middle of the day. The camp was also located on a gentle slope that lead down to Lake Eyasi in the north, and up to the Kidero hills in the south. It was a region filled with natural beauty and geological features that I had never seen before. These included rocky outcroppings south of the camp, and a view of the Eyasi Escarpment to the north on the opposite shore of Lake Eyasi. A magical place indeed.

Methods

This study was conducted between April 5, 2014 and April 25, 2014. My sample frame was the Hadzabe in general, and my sample population was a group of thirteen Hadzabe adults in Mlango Moja. The five Hadzabe children that lived with the thirteen adults were not included in this study. The study site in Mlango Moja was an appropriate location for the study because of its relative isolation from the cultural tourism industry that has sprung up around the Hadzabe. My primary methodology for gathering data was participant observation. This methodology was supplemented by semi-structured interviews with individual study participants, semi-structured interviews with the group of male study participants and female study participants separately, a key-informant interview with a shop owner in the study area, and a key-informant interview with Christian Schmeling in Kisima Ngeda. It should also be noted that the only topic of both the semi-structured interviews with study participants and the key-informant interview with the shop owner was a gift of cash that I gave to the Hadzabe on April 22, 2014.

My time with the Hadzabe was broken up into three phases. The first phase was the participant observer phase, which lasted from April 5 to April 15. For these first ten days, my only objectives were to break down the barriers that typically surround this kind of inter-cultural interaction, and to try to fit in with the Hadzabe group. During this time, my ‘supplies’ consisted of the clothes I was wearing (scarf, glasses, button down shirt, khaki pants, and sandals made from car tires), a bottle of iodine tablets and malaria pills, a knife, a blanket, and a cell phone. I tried to come off as just another human being, someone relatable and real. I did not want to be just another rich white tourist. In this vein, I asked that Halfan, my tour guide and translator, leave me alone. I thought that having a middle-man mediating my interactions with the Hadzabe would create unnecessary distance between us, and give the Hadzabe an opportunity to objectify me as a tourist or judge me as ‘just another white person’. I wanted to get to know everyone as an equal, so for the entirety of the study I relied heavily on my Swahili skills for communication, not on my translator.

My translator dropped me off on April 5, returned once for an hour or so on April 10, and then again on April 15 to bring me a notebook and a pen. This April 15 date marked the beginning of the second phase, where I was both a human, and a student writing a paper. Instead of sleeping away the afternoons like I had often done before, I started writing them away instead.

Between April 15 and April 22, my focus was on both on coming off as just another human being, and recording results for this product.

On April 22, my translator returned a third time for the afternoon with 180,000 shillings (about 110 USD) from my budget, a 2,500 TZS (1.6 USD) gift of tobacco, a small digital camera, and a tape recorder. With his help translating, I gave my thanks and a gift of cash to each individual, conducted the individual semi-structured interviews, the semi-structured interviews with the group of men, and the semi-structured interviews with the group of women. The data from these interviews can be found in the *Appendix* section. This date (April 22) was the start of phase three, where I appeared to be a human, a student/researcher, and a camera-wielding tourist. The camera was used to take photos of the results of my study over the following two days to include in an accompanying PowerPoint presentation, but nevertheless, I now appeared to also be a tourist to some of the group from that date on.

I gave a gift of 10,000 TZS (about 8 USD) to every adult member of the camp to show my gratitude for their kindness and hospitality over the past couple of weeks. I asked them what they would spend the money on, and recorded the results for each individual. These were the individual semi-structured interviews. I gave a larger gift of 60,000 TZS (about 48 USD) to the father or leader in the family, my friend Mbagayo. I then observed how the money I gave was spent over the following two days. My key informant interview with a shop owner in the study area helped me understand exactly how the money was spent. I left the Hadzabe and returned to Kisima Ngeda to write this paper on April 25, and returned to Arusha on May 1. My final key informant interview was conducted with Chris Schmeling in Kisima Ngeda on April 29. Both of these interviews can be found in the *Appendix*.

Biases include the fact that my data may only be representative of the Hadzabe in Mlango Moja, and not necessarily of the Hadzabe as a whole. The location of the group certainly effected the data, because not only did it lack tourism at the time the study was done, but Mlango Moja also seems to be a region rich with natural resources. The season in which I carried out the study affected the results in these regards. April is usually a low season for tourism, meaning that there was less money and gifts flowing into the possession of the Hadzabe. A methodological bias that must not be overlooked is that my presence effected the behavior of the Hadzabe over the period of time I was there. It is very hard for me to judge to what extent this was the case, but the fact is

that people act different when someone they don't really know is hanging around. Evidence of this will be clear in later sections.

The observational data I gathered was organized by category. The categories are food, clothing, shelter, medicine, education, and entertainment. I chose these categories because they are what we in the west think of as the necessities of life, and they are also things that we in the west tend to spend a lot of money on. My data also consists of anecdotes about how the Hadzabe both use and don't use money from my personal observations.

Results

The group I studied consisted of 9 men, 4 women, and 5 children. The men's names were Mbagayo, Jano, Dofu, Asumani, Azikelli, Gogo, Maloba, Momoya, and Ngosha. Mbagayo is the father of the five children, and also the father of Asumani and Azikelli. Jano and Dofu are Mbagayo's half brothers, and Momoya is the brother of Mbagayo's wife. Gogo, Maloba, and Ngosha are friends with everyone, but have no familial connection.

The four women in the group were Esta, Miriamu, Udaneda, and Bibi ya Jano. Esta is Mbagayo's wife, and Miriamu is Esta's mother. Udaneda is Mbagayo's sister, and Bibi ya Jano is Jano's wife. The five children were not included in this study.

All the men were fluent in both the Hadzabe language, and Swahili. Esta and Miriamu were also bilingual, but Udaneda and Bibi ya Jano only spoke the Hadzabe language. The group lived amongst the Datoga people, and had extensive interaction with them. The Datoga people speak their own language, but are also bilingual, with Swahili also as their second language. I believe the group was so fluent in Swahili because of their interaction with the Datoga. This was excellent for me, as I speak elementary Swahili and little to none of the Hadzabe language.

The Hadzabe lifestyle is one in which there is a lot of free time. I found that this group was in the habit of spending a lot of their free time sitting around a roadside shop run by a powerful Datoga man, watching the comings and goings of the people (mostly Datoga) passing through that day. The Datogas are pastoralists who live much like the Maasai. They wear robes and jewelry, carry long sticks for herding cattle and goats, and frequently have 'chezas' or dances that include jumping, singing, and sexual advances. Their diets are heavily reliant on corn, milk, and caffeinated tea. Some ride motorcycles, and many have an affinity for white sandals and sunglasses. Most men have cell phones, even where there is no reception. The phone is a status symbol, and is often used to play music, listen to the radio, and as a flashlight. Through interaction with these people, the members of the Hadzabe group that I studied have gained a great deal of exposure to western culture and ideas. This fact will be important to keep in mind throughout the paper. In this section, I will go category by category, showing what the Hadzabe use, and not use, money for when it comes to food, shelter, clothing, medicine, education and entertainment. Here are the results of my study.

Food

The main foods of the Hadzabe group that I studied were berries, roots, meat, honey, beans, milk, and corn. The Hadzabe mainly drink water, but also drink gin, soda and beer. The diets of the men and women are slightly different. Men eat more meat for example, simply because they hunt and the women don't. The women and children eat more roots for the same reason- women dig for roots, and men do not. When it comes to staples like berries though, there is more equality. Both sexes eat a lot of berries; Hadzabe poo is jam-packed with seeds. Because of these differences in diet, I will go one by one through each food and drink type, breaking down what it is, how it is obtained and prepared, and who (man, woman, child) eats how much of it. Then, I will recount what happened when I gave a gift of cash to the Hadzabe group. After that, I will move on from the 'food' category to the 'shelter' category. I will start with berries.

Berries were a staple of the Hadzabe diet. There were practically whole forests full of berry trees in Mlango Moja, and every day of the study both men and women went out and ate berries off the trees to their heart's content. We mainly ate three kinds of berries, and each had their own unique characteristics. Undushibi berries were bright orange and juicy, guilabe'e berries were light brown when ripe and taste like honey, and kongorobe'e berries were deep orange, fibrous, and sweet. All three kinds of berries have pits, and the kongorobe'e ones were difficult to swallow due to their size. Guilabe'e berries are small and thus have little pits, and the pits of the undushibi berries are coated in a sweet goo that one has no trouble swallowing whole. On two occasions, the women went out and collected big pot-fulls of guilabe'e berries, brought them back to camp, and then boiled them down to make a sweet sort of stew.

Roughly one or two times per day, any of the three types of berries were collected and brought back to camp in a metal pot or a small plastic container or in pockets. Whoever happened to be at camp at that time ate them on the spot. More common though was for a member of the camp (group) to just go out and have a meal in the trees without bringing a container along to fill and bring home. The berries were delicious and filling, and were a solid staple of the Hadzabe diet. Both men and women eat about an equal amount of berries.

Another staple are roots or tubers (the words are interchangeable). Tubers were gathered nearly every day by the women, then brought back to camp and cooked on an open fire. Whoever was around at the time the roots were cooked was welcome to eat them, but a lot of the time the men were out either hunting, eating berries, or sitting around the Datoga shop. This

means that the roots were mostly eaten by the women and children. And the tubers are big! The size of my arm sometimes! Mama and Bibi (grandma) would occasionally take me with them in the afternoons to ‘help’ them dig for roots, it was hard work. Everyone had a long sturdy sharpened stick, and their hands. Bibi would find the right tree, sit down, take off her shoes, and make a big hole. She’d loosen up the dirt with the stick, then scoop it out of the hole with a gnarled claw of a hand. When she found a tuber, she would dig around it, exposing as much as possible. Then she’d ask for my knife, and cut the tuber out of the ground. The other women with us did the same, and when each woman had a few tubers, we would head back to camp and roast them. When a tuber was charred and ready, someone would take it out of the fire and hold it out to a friend so that they were each grabbing one end. Then they’d take a knife and cut it vaguely in half, and then peel the root and eat it. The smaller tubers were often eaten by one individual, and sometimes someone would peel the root first before sharing it with other members of the group. If it was too hot to hold or eat, everyone would just wait around, sometimes laughing and joking, sometimes silent and spacey. The roots were juicy and sometimes somewhat fibrous. When they were stringy they would be chewed and chewed into a dry nugget, then spat out onto the ground. When they were starchy and sweet, one could eat the whole thing, the lingering taste of earth the only thing left on the palate. The roots were abundant, but like I said, were more of a staple of the female diet than of that of the males.

While females favored roots, males favored meat. All of the men carried a bow and arrow with them, nearly at all times, when outside of the camp. The bow staff was made from a thick vine like branch that comes from one of the bushes/trees in the region. The bow strings that I observed being made and used were crafted from the woven plastic sacks that corn is transported in. These sacks were taken apart, and the resultant string was wound together in such a way that a strong thick rope was produced. There is more on the bow and arrow in the education and entertainment sections.

The arrows were made from the branches of another tree in the region. The branches were shoots coming off another larger branch, and were quite straight to begin with. The bark was whittled off the stick, and then straightened further by rubbing the stick on the coals of a fire, then bending the stick into line by holding it firm between the teeth and pulling on either end with the hands. When the stick was straight, the ends were cut off and a notch for the bowstring was put on one end. Feathers were attached with kudu tendons.

There were three kinds of arrow tips. One was simply a sharp, pointed end to the stick, while another was a metal arrow head bought from the Datoga. The third kind of arrow tip was a metal arrow head, with a big glob of poison stuck strategically to the stem of the arrow head. The poison was made from boiling down a specific plant in the area, although I never saw it done.

The different tips had different purposes. The sharpened stick was used for small birds, the metal arrow head was used for larger birds, and the poisoned arrow was used to kill larger prey. Specifically, the poisoned arrows were used on one kudu and one dik-dik during my stay. A poisoned arrow was also used on a zebra, but was ineffective due to its being left out in the rain the night before. The zebra got away.

I observed that the men were very good at shooting birds. After getting one or more birds out on a walk, the men would sit down in the shade and make a fire. Sometimes they used matches, sometimes someone took a straightened stick, a branch from a specific tree, and some dry zebra poo and made a fire the old fashioned way. Twirling the straight stick into the branch, an ember was produced. After being left to smolder in the zebra shit, small sticks were piled on top and the whole thing was blown on until a crackling fire came to life. Some of the birds feathers were often taken off, then the whole bird was plopped on the fire, or after a while, the coals. The remaining feathers burned off, and the bird was cooked. The stomach and intestinal tract were removed, and the now open bird was put back on the fire. The whole bird (depending on the size) was eaten piece by piece, bones and all. Bones that were too hard or big to chew had the meat picked clean off of them, and the beak was often discarded. The birds were the food of the men, as they were prepared and eaten in the field with no females present. The same was true of the dik-dik.

The dik-dik was killed about two hours away from camp. Momoya shot the animal, and he, Mbagayo and I ate most of it. The hind legs and stomach lining were carried back and given as a gift to a specific Datoga family that lived about a half hour's walk away from our camp. This family was 'friends' with Mbagayo, and Mbagayo was often badgering them to give him some milk or a little tobacco. The day of the dik-dik present, we received no gift in return. This system of gift giving is an interesting alternative to the use of money, and is very akin to barter.

The kudu was killed an hours walk from camp, and it took eight men to carry the whole thing back. Once it was back, men women and children all ate the meat. There were certain parts of the animal that only the men were allowed to eat; this was called 'chakula ya mzee' or food of

the men. These include the heart, liver, lungs, and other organs of the animal. Mbagayo told me that the women couldn't eat it because if they did, they would grow strong. We ate chakula ya mzee three times, once in the middle of the night for some reason. All of the other kudu meat was available for consumption by everyone in the camp, and the meat lasted two full days.

Honey is another food that was primarily consumed by the men. The men went to areas where they knew there to be bees living, found trees with bee hives inside, and lit a fire. The fire was used to stop the bees from biting. For each tree, a man cut a large hole where he detected a hive, put a burning stick inside, then pulled it out and reached in with his hands. Fistful upon fistful of honey came out of the trees sometimes, and on one occasion near the end of my stay, four buckets were filled with honey in just one morning. I observed the Hadzabe getting honey on three occasions total. One time it was shared some with the Datoga family that Mbagayo is friends with, and another time (the third day of gathering honey that was near the end of my stay) it was sold to 'Swahilis', or Bantu-origin men from the city who were passing by the Datoga shop after a day of relieving Mlango Moja of a tractor-full of firewood. One and a half kilos of honey were sold to the Swahilis for the ripe price of 5000 TZS (about 4 USD) that day. This is incredibly cheap, as half a kilogram often goes for 7000 TZS at stores in most towns. These 5000 TZS in particular were immediately spent on four pouches of Kiroba gin, and one Coca Cola.

Only on that third occasion was the honey brought back to camp, and that honey was only shared with the other men and children, not the women, because the women were not home. The women were out getting beans that day.

Beans were another staple of the Hadzabe diet. The women worked picking and shucking beans for the Datoga on a farm not far away, and were paid for their labor in beans. The beans first need to be taken out of the dried bean pods, and on one occasion, Bibi and I performed this task back at camp as night was falling. On another occasion however, I observed that mama came home with just the dry beans. Once the dried beans are at home, they are boiled in a metal pot over the kitchen fire. The metal pots were donations from some of the researchers who have been active in the region. There will be more information about the donations of researchers in the 'clothing' section.

The cooked beans were always then taken off the fire, and divided up into a number of pots. A circle of people always formed around each pot. The women ate from their pot, the children from their pot, and the men from their pot. Everyone sitting around a pot grabbed a

handful of hot beans, and generally did not grab another handful until all the others in the circle had grabbed a handful too. Occasionally, someone added a little salt. The salt was bought at the Datoga shop with money made from selling honey or from tourist donations. Beans were gathered only by the women, but men and women both ate beans before going to sleep every night. The children also ate beans in the middle of the day every day at around 12 noon. Beans were plentiful, and everyone ate beans.

The Datoga family that Mbagayo was friends with gave us men all milk on four occasions. The milk was fermented in a calabash, and the second, third, and fourth times that the men received milk from the Datoga, Mbagayo took a couple empty containers along to fill up and take back to camp. This milk was then shared with the children. I never observed any of the women drinking the fermented milk.

Corn, also known as maize and mahindi, was consumed by the men in the form of makande (made by lightly pounding and then boiling the kernels) one day at the home of Mbagayo's Datoga friends on one of the occasions that we were given milk. On another occasion, when my translator came to give me my notebook and pen, I gave a gift of 5000 shillings to the group. This money was immediately used to buy seven kilos of corn flour (and a box of matches). The corn flour was then boiled, creating ugali, a very popular and common food in Tanzania. The ugali was eaten in the same way that the beans were, and was shared across age and gender lines.

The water used to boil the beans and ugali came from a close by manmade watering hole that the Datoga people in the region dug for their cattle and goats. That water was also used as drinking water by the Hadzabe. One evening, I had just two sips of this water. The next day I threw up three times and couldn't keep anything down. The day after, I was fine. After that, I was very careful to treat all of my water with iodine.

I thought that it would be interesting to see what the Hadzabe group I was staying with did with the money that they receive from tourism. I wanted to (and was expected to) give a gift at the end of my stay, and I decided that it fit with my study to give them the gift a few days before I left so that I could observe what happened to the cash. As I explained in the methods section, I took each of the thirteen adults aside individually and thanked them, then gave them a gift of Tanzanian Shillings, and then asked what they would spend the money on. The responses were fairly simple- the items people said they would buy with the money were limited to the

following. A new blanket, some corn, new shoes, tobacco, beans, marijuana, a flashlight, shorts, and new arrow heads. All of these things can be bought from Datoga people in the area, or at the big market that happens twice a month in a neighboring region. The full results, broken down by individual, are in the *Appendix*.

I then observed what they actually did with the money. They had a big party! Three boom boxes appeared from nowhere, and everyone was drunk and dancing down in front of the Datoga's shop by the road for about four or five hours. Mbagayo was down for the count, having had way too much gin. Everyone else, men, women, and children all together, were having a grand time. Myself included, although I didn't drink.



Figure 1. – Student Joseph Marques dancing with Hadzabe friends.

On the day that I left, I held a key-informant interview with the powerful Datoga man who ran the shop. I had asked him to keep track of what the Hadzabe had actually spent money on that day, and when I left he gave me the results. These can be found in full in the *Appendix* as well. The results were surprising. The Hadzabe group spent all the money I gave them, and possibly more. By the store owner's estimate, the Hadzabe spent 130,000 or more shillings on

gin and beer alone. This is about 80 USD, and almost 75 percent of the money I gave them that day. The rest of the money was mostly spent on cigarettes and soda, although 36,000 of it did go to buying corn and sending it to the machine to be turned into flour for ugali. All in all, the owner of the store's estimate for the amount of money spent that day was about 221,800 TZS, which is about 40,000 more than the 180,000 total shillings that I gave them. Where the other 40,000 came from is a mystery to me. The fact that the numbers don't add up could be due to an error of the part of the store owner, but I think that it is more likely that the store owner gave them goods on credit or as a gift. That Datoga man likes to have power, and perhaps keeping the Hadzabe indebted to him is part of his game. Whatever the case, we all had a good time.

It should also be noted here that the Hadzabe got drunk one other time over the course of my study that I have not yet talked about. That was on my third day with them, and we had just returned from a long, tiring, unsuccessful baboon hunt. Mbagayo and all the men somehow procured a whole bunch of gin from the store despite having no money, and I asked how they did it. When I asked Mbagayo, he told me that he had traded some poisoned arrows for the booze. When I asked the store owner, he said he had given it to them for free. Another unresolved mystery.

Shelter

The Hadzabe have two kinds of shelters. One is simply known as a 'tree' in the English language. 'Trees' provide shade from the sun in the middle of the day, and it is very pleasant to sit or sleep under them. The other kind of shelter that I observed the Hadzabe people using was a grass hut made from branches woven together and covered by dry tall grass. A picture of this type of shelter is on the cover page. The women made the shelters, and when it rains at night, all were thankful. It only rained three nights during my study, which meant that 17 nights were spent sleeping outside. The group of men slept all together in a line by a fire in the middle of the camp. All the men had blankets underneath them acting as ground cloths, and all the men were also wrapped in another blanket to protect them from mosquitoes and keep them warm. The women slept together or with their husbands, and the kids slept all together with either their mom or grandmother.

There were five grass huts in total, two were specifically for Mbagayo, his wife, and his five little children. One was for Jano and his wife, and the other two were in the center of the camp and much more communal, with everyone and anyone welcome to sleep or hang out in.

Members of the group often slept away the hot hours when the sun was highest, if not under a tree, then in the shade provided by one of these huts. I was lucky enough to observe Bibi (Miriamu) building a hut almost from scratch over my time with the group, and it is certainly an activity that involves a high degree of skill. More on this skill is in the education section.

Clothing

My semi-structured interviews with the groups of Hadzabe men and women focused on clothing. As you may have noted in the picture above, the Hadzabe dress in what appear to be tattered modern western clothes. Men wear shorts and a t-shirt, sandals made from old tires and nails, and large, kitchen knives. Women wear pants or kangas (skirts) with shirts and other simple bits of cloth. Both men and women wear necklaces, anklets, bracelets and crowns made of colorful plastic beads. Did the Hadzabe spend money on these clothes? If not, where did they get them? What did they wear before they had these clothes?

This group of Hadzabe got their clothes and beads in the past two to three years from four researchers: Frank, Daudi, George, and Brian. Exactly who got what from whom is in the *Appendix*. It is unclear whether this group of Hadzabe was wearing modern clothes before these four researchers gave them all the clothes that they have. It is certain however that before wearing modern clothes, the Hadzabe wore animal skins. (Marlowe, 94) Everything was made from animal skin; shirts, shoes, blankets, skirts, you name it. It is not entirely clear what happened to all the animal skins that the Hadzabe wore before they made the switch to modern clothes, why or when exactly they made the switch to modern clothes, and why they don't go back to wearing animal skins. The information that I gained from my interviews however is the following.

Bibi told me that the reason they changed clothes is because all the other Hadzabe in the region were changing clothes, and slowly slowly, her camp did too. Jano and Ngosha told me that they barter-traded the animal skins for western clothes from wazungu (white people). Dofu told me that when he was a child, all his clothes were made of animal skin. Dofu is over twenty and under thirty years old.

At any rate, the Hadzabe spend little money on clothes today, occasionally going to the market to pick up new blankets, shirts or shoes. In the past, the Hadzabe did not spend any money on clothes at all, due to their being made entirely from animal skin. The metal pots and plastic buckets that this Hadzabe group uses to cook food and carry water were also gifts of

researchers. Before using metal pots, the group used clay pots. Before using plastic buckets, the group used hollow gourds.

One final note about clothing and language. It is well known that the Hadzabe speak a click language. What is often overlooked is the ‘buzz’ language of the mosquitoes that come out at night. While animal skin blankets thoroughly protect the user from mosquito bites, cloth blankets do not. The cacophony of mosquito humming every night before sleep was certainly something I realized I needed to get used to early on in my stay, as were the myriad of mosquito bites that I woke up to every morning. I think that the Hadzabe would benefit from going back to using animal skins for clothing and protection, rather than continuing to use modern clothes and blankets made from cloth. The sooner they do this the better, lest the skill of making clothes and blankets in the way that the Hadzabe had done for 100,000 years be forgotten by the passage of time and the death of the elders in the community who still retain that skill.

Medicine

I only observed one kind of medicine being used. Dofu said he had ‘mafua’ or the flu one day, and for the following two or three days he boiled and drank the wood from a specific tree that everyone knew about. The medicine produced was (as I was told by Mbagayo) the Hadzabe medicine for everything, from stomach aches to fevers.

Mbagayo told me of a plant that is used when someone has malaria, and Jano told me that if a sickness is really bad, they’ll take the person to the hospital. A white lady set up a clinic where the Hadzabe receive treatment for free, although I was told by Jano that it is expensive to get there. The clinic is far from where these Hadzabe live.

A final sort of ‘medicine’ that the Hadzabe used was marijuana. Several members of the group expressed to me that banghi or ganja increases their endurance and stamina when working long hours or walking long distances. The ganja comes both as gifts from wazungu (white tourists or researchers) and the Datoga, but Ngosha also told me that plants can also be found growing wild in the region. The plants are free of course when found growing wild, and Ngosha told me of one occasion where he harvested a very big plant that he happened upon. There is more information on ganja in the ‘entertainment’ section.

For the most part however, the Hadzabe that I interacted with were incredibly healthy. Everyone was fit and physically able, and no one, not even Bibi, took any sort of medicine on a regular basis. This medicine section was hard to plan and write, because no one seemed to have

any kind of mental or physical ailments. I think this says something important about the Hadzabe way of life, and I touch on this in the discussion section.

Education

What is an education? Is it sitting in a classroom, staring at a clock, waiting patiently to go to lunch? Is it recounting information about long past wars or regurgitating times tables on tests? This is one kind of education, and is what education means to many people in the west. In this context though, I would like to posit that education is rather a system of learning, whereby skills and ideas are transmitted from individual to individual. The Hadzabe have a great education system, and it is one in which no one seems to ‘fail’. Living the Hadzabe lifestyle requires the mastery of many skills, some of which I have already talked about in previous sections. Those include bow and arrow making, hunting, butchering, tree climbing, medicine making, badgering/begging/trading, gathering honey, and making fire for the men, and bean picking, tuber gathering, beading, and shelter making for the women. Skills that I have not yet mentioned in this paper but which are noteworthy are navigation skills, knife sharpening, fire building and maintenance, childcare, shoe repair, and a general industriousness and ingenuity that helps the Hadzabe solve problems that arise from day to day. These skills are passed from older generations to younger generations informally, with each person learning at his or her own pace. Education for the Hadzabe is clear and direct, and there is always an immediate and apparent reason or point to learning that which others are teaching. This is different from western education, where the point of ‘getting a job’ or ‘getting into a good college’ somewhere far in the future is often lost in the minutia of memorizing obscure facts or scientific equations. Indeed, a ‘test’ is never something to stress out about in the Hadzabe system, but rather, it is just a natural part of the learning process that is life. There are no school fees or taxes, just a sharing of knowledge and the pride that comes with mastering a skill.

Mbagayo is the only member of the camp who attended a western school. He learned to read and write in Swahili, and earned a seventh grade education from a boarding school in Endamaghan. That education did not cost money for Mbagayo.

In a key-informant interview with Chris Schmeling, I became familiar with the story of Shani Msafiri, a young Hadzabe man from Mongo Wa Mono who is currently earning a degree in law from Tumaini University in Makumira, just outside of Arusha. Shani’s secondary schooling and first years of university education were sponsored by the Eyasi Foundation Trust

Limited, a trust that has been set up by Chris and his wife Nani to assist the Hadzabe in a rapidly changing world. Shani wants to earn his degree in law so that he can fight for the rights of Hadzabe people, the end goal being securing land rights for the Hadzabe for years to come. Shani was recently part of a CNN piece on the Hadzabe people, and he is one of the (if not the) major success story in terms of western education and the Hadzabe.

Other Hadzabe children do attend school, but like Mbagayo, do not often complete more than primary school. The government funded primary school with boarding facilities for Hadzabe that Shani and Mbagayo went to in Endamaghan has about 60 or so Hadzabe in attendance there at any time. Only in the last couple of years have other schooling options become available to the Hadzabe. Whether they complete any western education or not, it is fair to say that the most important form of education for the Hadzabe has been and continues to be the ‘natural’ kind that I outlined above. Neither ‘natural’ or ‘western’ education costs the Hadzabe any money at all.

Entertainment

The Hadzabe were very good at entertaining themselves. They did not rely on T.V.s or video games to have a good time obviously. Rather, the activities that I observed the Hadzabe doing for fun included singing, dancing, whistling, chatting, spacing out, drinking gin and (an important one) sitting around a fire smoking pot and tobacco, telling stories and joking around. Everyone was always going for walks, whether to get berries or honey or beans or roots. The men spent a lot of time at the Datoga’s shop, watching people and talking with them, straightening arrows and smoking cigarettes rolled from the cardboard of discarded gin boxes.

One day, Azikelli made a ‘guitar’ from an empty soda bottle, a piece of cloth, an extra bow, and a stick. For about four days, everyone wanted a turn to play it. And everyone somehow knew exactly how to play it. Then after four days, everyone lost interest and forgot about the guitar. I went looking for it when I got my camera to take a picture for this project, but it had disappeared.

Another time, for about three days around the full moon, some of the men stopped showing up at night to sleep in the camp. When everyone got back, I asked where they had been. Turns out the full moon is a great time for ‘cheza’, or the dance that the Datoga people frequently do. With the bright moon and a cloudless sky, people can be up all night with great visibility. All of the younger men had been about a three hours walk away in a town called

Guidamilanda to dance and sing with the Datoga people, and also with the other Hadzabe groups in the region. All the men were entirely able to provide food for themselves for free wherever they went, as long as they had their bows and arrows and their hands for picking berries, so a few days away from the rest of the group to enjoy a good party was no problem.

Researcher Frank had given this Hadzabe camp a few boom boxes with music, and on the day I gave my gift they all came out from hiding and got extensive use. From that day until the day I left, the boom-box was on late into the night, even long after everyone had gone to bed. I wondered why no one had been playing music on those before, and initially I thought that maybe someone bought new batteries when I gave them the gift of cash. Then I remembered the guitar, and how little entertaining items go through these fads of use until people get tired of them and discard them in favor of something else. My friends at home and I do the same.

For the Hadzabe, buying alcohol to throw a big party is something that costs money. I found that all of the other activities that they do to entertain themselves do not. They are either free, or require a little bartering/ gift exchange. Interestingly, my findings showed that there was in fact a fine line between entertainment, and life in general. In some ways, life was their entertainment. It certainly is entertaining for a westerner to go out for the day with the Hadzabe, and I think that it was entertaining for the Hadzabe just to go out and spend the day with other Hadzabe too. Going for a hunt teeters on the edge of work and play; climbing trees to gather berries is something I would do for fun. Spending time with this group reminded me of my summers at home in a way, just in that everyone in both situations was simply out to have a good time with their friends. This social aspect cannot go understated. The tobacco, ganja and alcohol habits that the Hadzabe exhibit are reminiscent of those of some of my friends when they were teenagers too, and despite my being a different skin color and having a different background and skill set, by the end of my study I was seeing more similarities between us than differences. The fact is, we're all human, and that often means more than one thinks.

Discussion

The Hadzabe in my study got what they used in four main ways. They either a) got it from the land or each other, b) worked for it, c) received it as a gift or bartered object from the Datoga or Wazungu, or d) they bought it. The only thing that members of the Hadzabe group worked for were beans, the things members of the group bartered for or received as a gifts were tobacco, banghi, western clothes, cooking pots, water jugs, boom-boxes and corn, and the only substantive things that members of the group bought were alcohol and corn. All other things that we in the west think of as necessities in life, from food all the way through shelter, clothing, medicine, education, and entertainment, are provided for amply by the land, and by each other.

So what does this mean for us westerners? What can we learn about ourselves and one another after considering this perspective?

My analysis, put simply, is that the Hadzabe don't really use money for much, and despite this, they lead great lives, devoid of a lot of the problems that we in western societies face. This is important. No one takes medication for ADD or depression, no one is obese or has diabetes (despite all the honey). People are creative and industrious for the most part, and have a whole lot of free time on their hands to relax and chill with their friends. The elderly maintain a sense of purpose well into old age, and the unemployment rate is zero. Some people assert that the Hadzabe are alcoholics, but from my observations, I judge that they're just trying to have a good time in the same way that a typical college student in the US is every Friday night. The carbon footprint of each Hadzabe person is miniscule, and the hearts of the Hadzabe that I interacted with were open and enormous. It is true that the Hadzabe have rocks and grass instead of couches, and shade and a breeze instead of AC. When one looks however at how their way of life meets the fundamental needs of a human being, how it systematically squashes many of the problems that our western society faces, and how purpose and entertainment are woven seamlessly into daily activities, one might reasonably assert that their way of life is superior to ours in the west in many ways.

There are of course different problems that Hadzabe society faces however. Climate change, agriculture, pastoralism and what we in the west call 'development' are changing the land that the Hadzabe live on in such a way that makes it less inhabitable. The biggest problem is

that large animals have gone away from Hadzabe areas, preferring to live primarily in Tanzania's spectacular national parks.

One tangible effect of the lack of big game is that it is said to be leading to the premature death of the elderly Hadzabe. Lawrence, an employee at Kisima Ngeda Tented Camp, asserts that in the past, it was the younger men regularly returning to camp with big game for everyone to eat that kept the old men healthy and strong. (Lawrence, PC) Now with the dwindling of big game in Hadzabe areas, the elderly are less strong and less vital as they once were at their age. The result is increased mortality for the elderly - those who in the past would have relied on their family members bringing home big game.

The fact is though, these big problems that the Hadzabe face are mainly created by other systems whose effects are the problems for the Hadzabe system. Indeed, the system that the Hadzabe use and have been using for tens of thousands of years is a way of life that does not create problems for the Hadzabe down the line. This is totally different from our western system, whose unsustainable model of growth has created huge problems not only for our own society in the present and down the line, but all other human societies in the present and down the line as well. With the full effects of climate change, resource scarcity, and an unsustainable global population looming to be felt in the near future, western society has created long term problems that the western system may not be able to solve. At the center of this western system is the philosophy of capitalism and the perpetual growth of the global economy, and at the center of these philosophies is the use of money.

My results showed that the Hadzabe don't really need to use money. They like spending it on parties, but it is not a necessary part of their way of life. The fact is that the Hadzabe are fundamentally disconnected from the philosophy of capitalism (that the accumulation of wealth allows for investment, development, and an increased standard of living for the masses), and this mirrors their fundamental disconnect from the grave problems that face many members of western society today which include poor health, unemployment, and a lack of a sense of purpose. This correlation is significant. We can certainly learn to be a bit more like the Hadzabe.

Finally, the Hadzabe way of life is one in which social connection with friends and family is paramount. This is so important. Friends and family too often take a back seat in the west, especially when money is involved. The fact that love is a primary source of entertainment and fulfillment for the Hadzabe that I studied reminds us of the importance of friends.

Limitations & Recommendations

The limitations of this study were fairly predictable and straight-forward. The time of year and amount of time that I spent with the Hadzabe were the most significant limitations. The month of April is typically a low season for tourism, and typically a beautiful time of year with little rain. In this way, the month of April is ideal for studying how the Hadzabe live when the weather is nice and there are no tourists around. This may not be necessarily representative of how the Hadzabe live year-round however. Given that almost 6,000 tourists checked in at the Lake Eyasi cultural tourism office in 2013, and given informal conversations with both the Hadzabe study participants and others familiar with tourism in the region, it certainly seems that tourism has an impact in the region that went largely unrepresented in my study. Someone studying the Hadzabe for a longer time period, in a different location, or even just at a different time of year would likely get different results. Differences in diet would also be observed by changing these variables.

An interesting future study might look at the effect of tourism on the Hadzabe in general. If this study were done in the fall semester, perhaps observation of tourist-Hadzabe interaction could be a part of the study. If this study were in the spring, the study would likely have to be conducted on the basis of semi-structured and key-informant interviews alone.

A final limitation worth noting is that at the time of the study I was not an especially skilled speaker of either Swahili or the Hadzabe language (nor am I now). A student or researcher who was highly skilled in either language would be able to listen to and communicate with the Hadzabe better, and subsequently, would have an increased ability of getting to know the Hadzabe on a deeper level.

Conclusion

While the Hadzabe way of life is one in which the use of money is not a necessity, where forms of food, shelter, clothing, medicine, education, and entertainment are all abundant and all free, there are ways in which the western monetary economy is effecting the desires of the Hadzabe, and there are definitely reasons that the Hadzabe want and use money. The primary reason that I found the Hadzabe want money is to buy corn and to party. Although this tendency was a reality, my results primarily showed that the Hadzabe do not spend a lot of money, or pay that much attention to the accumulation of material possessions. Despite this, they live great lives. This implies, importantly, that happiness is something that comes from inside, not from outside. How much happiness do we really gain from our material comforts? We can learn from asking this question.

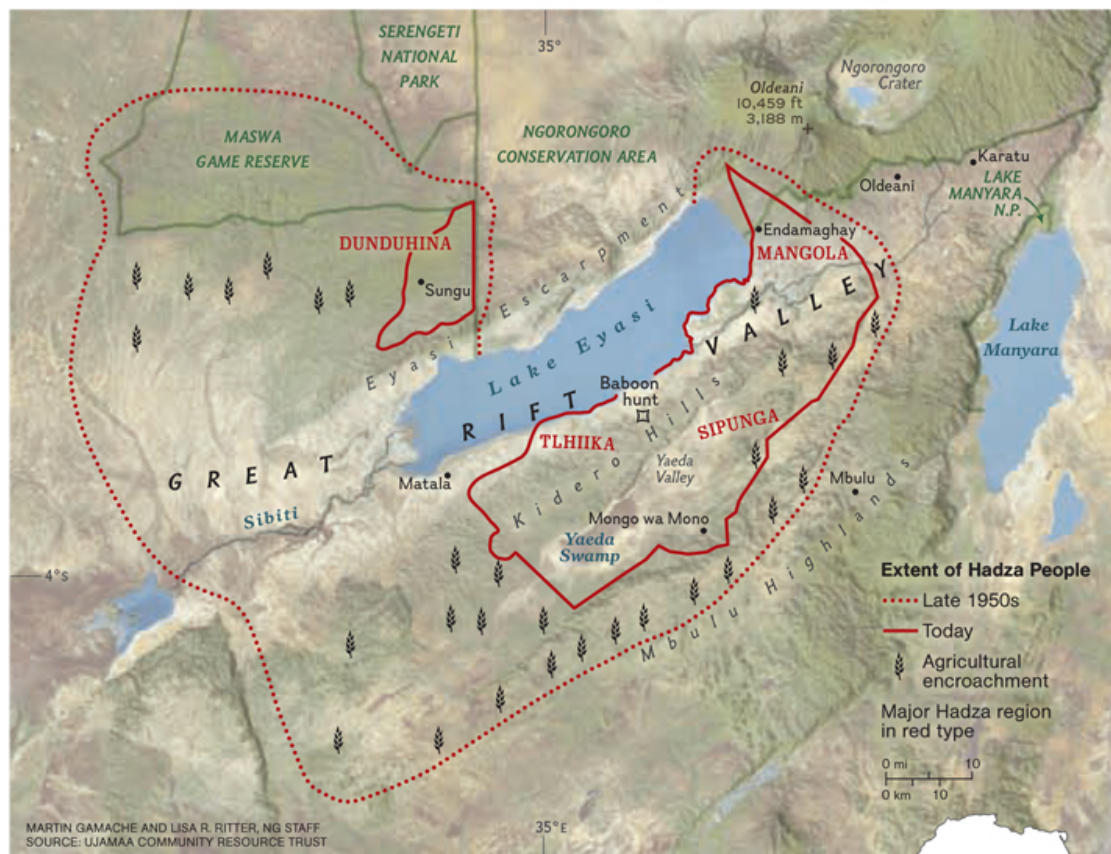
The Hadzabe don't give too much importance to material things, and I believe they're happier for it. I think part of the reason for this has to do with how often in the west, so much time is spent thinking about how to get things, and then once you have them, so much time is spent thinking about how to keep them. When you don't have anything, there's nothing to think about, and you can just *be* and be happy. The Buddha is often quoted as saying 'there is no happiness other than peace', and in the pursuit of this happiness, he actually recommended renouncing one's possessions and moving out to the wilderness to train the mind to be happy regardless of any external situation. When there's nothing to think about, a peaceful mind ensues. This was one insight I gained from my course of study with the Hadzabe.

I don't think we should all renounce our possessions and move to the woods necessarily, but the wisdom of the Hadzabe is similar to that of the Buddha. My study showed that comfort and money are not necessary to a good and happy life. It is too often true of people in the west that they define themselves in terms of what they have, at least to some extent. In extreme cases, it becomes what life is all about. Taking a close look at the lifestyle of the Hadzabe people pushes us westerners to reexamine where we actually stand when it comes to our material possessions, what we truly consider to be important in our lives, and whether we really need all that we think we need to be happy. If my experience with the Hadzabe tells us anything, it is that we really don't need much.

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Appendix A: Map of the Lake Eyasi Region and Past and Present Hadzabe Lands



SHIFTING GROUND The Hadza, who once moved freely over 4,000-plus square miles of the Great Rift Valley, are down to a quarter of their homeland as farms and livestock expand. Some Tanzanians see the group as an embarrassment for a modernizing nation.



This image was taken from a National Geographic article on the Hadzabe. The study site in Mlango Moja was between Lake Eyasi and the Kidero Hills, roughly close to where the marker for a baboon hunt that was written about in the National Geographic article is on this map.

Appendix B: Interview with Gambanya, owner of the shop in Mlango Moja, on April 25, 2014

Q: What did the Hadzabe buy on April 22, 2014?

A:

7 boxes of Kiroba, 10,000 TZS each

30,000 TZS worth of corn

10 beers, 2,500 TZS each

8 sodas, 1,000 TZS each

20 pieces of bread, 300 TZS each

5,000 TZS on bubble gum

3 packs of cigarettes, 4,000 TZS each

6,000 TZS to send the corn to the machine to be milled

8 'Furuto' fruit punch, 1,000 TZS each

10 Malta Sodas, 1,500 each

2 bags of salt, 400 TZS each

3 boxes of Konyagi, 12,000 TZS each

Appendix C: Individual Semi-Structured Interviews Conducted on April 22, 2014

Q: How will you use this gift of money?

A:

Mbagayo: Corn, flashlight, tobacco, ganja. Will save 40,000 out of the 60,000.

Azikeli: Food from Kibandani (Datoga's shop).

Jano: Banghi, shorts, tobacco, and save so that he can get transport to the hospital if he or his family members ever need to go.

Ngosha: Corn, tobacco, and ganja.

Asumani: Food and tobacco.

Gogo: Arrow heads, banghi and tobacco.

Dofu: Corn and tobacco.

Maloba: Corn, banghi, a blanket, tobacco.

Mamoya: Shoes, tobacco, banghi, something he sees and wants.

Miriamu: Blanket and corn.

Esta: Shoes and corn.

Udaneda: Blanket, tobacco, and shoes.

Bibi ya Jano: Corn and beans.

Appendix D: Semi-Structured Interview Conducted on April 22, 2014, Group of Men

Q: Where did you get your clothes?

A:

Mbagayo: Frank gave shoes and shorts. Brian gave knife. Shirt and belt bought at Mnadani (market).

Azikeli: Frank gave shorts, shirt, beads, and necklace. Brian gave knife.

Jano: Daudi gave everything except knife. George gave knife.

Ngosha: Brian gave shoes and shorts, necklace and knife. Shirt bought at Mnadani.

Asumani: Frank gave shoes and necklace. Brian gave shirt, shorts, and knife. Bracelets were a gift from Datoga people. Blanket bought at Mnadani. The money to buy the blanket came from selling honey to the Datoga.

Gogo: Brian gave shirt and shorts. Shoes and blanket bought at the market. Mama gave necklace, Wadatoga gave bracelets.

Dofu: Frank gave everything, includes shoes, shorts, knife, and beads for necklace.

Maloba: Daudi gave everything, includes shirts shoes shorts, necklace, bracelet, and knife.

Momoya: Brian gave everything, includes knife, shirt, shorts, and shoes.

Appendix E: Semi-Structured Interviews Conducted on April 22, 2014, Group of Women

Q: Where did you get your clothes?

A:

Miriamu: We don't go to Mnadani and we don't know how to get honey to trade for money. All of our clothes, pots and jugs come from wazungu. Frank and Daudi gave me my clothes.

Esta: Frank gave all clothes.

Udaneda: Frank and Daudi gave all clothes.

Bibi ya Jano: George gave all clothes.

Appendix F: Interview with Chris Schmeling on April 29, 2014

Q: Can you tell me a little bit about the young Hadzabe man earning his law degree? A: I would be happy to. Q: What is that man's name? A: His name is Shani Msafiri. Q: Where is he from? A: He is from Mongo Wa Mono in the Yeada Valley. Q: Where does he attend University? A: The school is called Tumaini University, it is in Makumira, close to Arusha. Tumaini means hope in Kiswahili, and the school is a large one and they say quite a good one. Q: How was his education sponsored? A: He went to primary school in Endamaghan at the government funded school there, then our little trust the Eyasi Foundation Trust Limited sponsored his secondary education and his first year at University, and finally a rather wealthy friend of my mum is sponsoring his final years of University education. Q: Did you set up the Eyasi Foundation Trust Limited? A: Yes, we've been receiving small donations for years from friends and guests at the tented camp, and we have a few trustees, like Georgie who was here earlier and a friend of ours in Arusha. Q: Do other Hadzabe go to western schools? A: Yes, for a long time the government funded school in Endamaghan was the only place they received western education. Now the Hadzabe can go to recently built day schools in most of their areas as well. Q: How many Hadzabe are in attendance at the primary school in Endamaghan? A: Hmm I would say about 60 Hadzabe students are enrolled at any given time.