Ensminger, Jean
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12 Structural Transformation and Its Consequences for Orma Women Pastoralists

Jean Ensminger

While there is now a growing literature analyzing the effects of structural adjustment upon agricultural societies in Africa, there is to my knowledge little if anything written about the effects of such policies upon pastoral societies, let alone the specific effects upon women in herding societies. In this chapter I consider the impact of these changes on the pastoral Orma of northeastern Kenya. In particular, I shall analyze the effects of two major policy shifts by the government of Kenya, which fall under a broad definition of structural adjustment, or macroeconomic and political changes designed to utilize government resources more efficiently (Jaycox 1988). The first of these is the rescheduling of agricultural and meat prices which took place between 1980 and 1987. The Orma are major marketers of meat, while they purchase substantial quantities of maize flour and sugar, all price-controlled agricultural commodities. The second policy change to be considered is the decentralization of the government bureaucracy, which officially began on the 1st of July 1983 (Government of Kenya 1987).

The case study material discussed in this paper is based upon two periods of field research among the Orma. The first of these (from July 1978 to February 1981) represents the baseline study, while the second (April to December 1987), is the period during which the effects of these changes were monitored. The data reported here are from two household economic surveys of most residents within the same 15 by 20 mile area around the market town of Wayu. Of the 230 households resident in

Jean Ensminger is assistant professor of anthropology, Washington University at St. Louis, with a Ph.D. from Northwestern University. She wishes to thank the following institutions for generous research support: Fulbright-Hays, the Ford Foundation, the National Science Foundation (BNS-7904273), the Rockefeller Foundation, and the National Institutes of Health (SSP 5 R01 HD21327 DBS). She also wishes to acknowledge the fine institutional support provided by the National Museums of Kenya and the Institute for Development Studies, University of Nairobi.

1979, 174 (76 percent) were surveyed, while of the 214 households resident in 1987, 180 (84 percent) were surveyed.

The Galole Orma and Their Place in Recent Kenyan Economic History

The Orma of northeastern Kenya are riverine cattle pastoralists with lesser numbers of sheep and goats. They reside in Tana River district, which borders the coast of Kenya, the Somali and the Wapokomo to the north and east, the Wakamba to the west, and the Giriama to the south. They are Islamic, Eastern Cushitic-speaking people of the Oromo language group.

This case study was carried out in the geographic center of Orma territory with the population known specifically as the Galole Orma, after the seasonal river which cuts the territory from east to west on a parallel with Hola, the district headquarters of Tana River. In 1979, 39 percent of Galole households were settled in villages with shops and were strongly integrated into the market economy as commercial beef producers. The other 61 percent were less involved in the market economy and to a greater extent nomadic. This group was generally more self-sufficient in meeting their subsistence needs, which consisted primarily of dairy products, supplemented only when necessary with purchased maize flour, sugar, tea, and cooking oil. By 1987, the market town population had increased to 63 percent from the 39 percent figure of 1979 and, although still pastoral, was engaged in much more floodplain agriculture, conditions permitting.

The findings presented in this chapter ought to be interpreted keeping in mind the historical position of the Orma in the 1970s and 1980s, as well as the recent economic history of Kenya. During the great Sahelian drought of the early 1970s, the Orma lost approximately 70 percent of their livestock. This period coincided with a major wave of sedentarization within the Wayu survey area and the permanent incorporation of those households into market relations, at least for their subsistence needs during the dry season (Ensminger 1984). Large numbers of households impoverished during this drought never recovered self-sufficiency as pastoral producers, though almost all maintain small herds to this day. The significant point to note is that major economic stratification occurred among the Orma in the early 1970s, thus predating the period under study here. In the 1970s the poor fended as best they could with help from wealthy relatives, government famine relief, and limited employment prospects in the area. It was not until the 1980s that significant new employment prospects for the poor appeared, reflecting an increasing economic diversification of the economy, or what may be interpreted as the beginning of true structural transformation.

As Lele (this volume) and Bates (1989) have noted, Kenya has fared better economically than most other African nations. Because economic management has historically been better, Kenya needed less-drastic structural adjustment corrections. Thus, the Orma case described below may appear to be at odds with the other case studies from different African nations presented in this volume, which indeed it probably is. The policy of administrative decentralization described in the second half of the chapter may serve as an example of the type of bold initiative which has brought Kenya to the (*relatively* speaking) favorable economic situation it enjoys today in Africa.

The Rescheduling of Commodity Prices

The early 1980s witnessed considerable changes in the government-controlled prices of key agricultural commodities in Kenya. Under pressure from the World Bank and the IMF, Kenya initiated numerous increases in prices to agricultural producers with consequently higher prices to consumers. While on the surface these policies may appear to be favorable to producers, it has been suggested that, in the case of farmers, the poor may actually be net purchasers of agricultural produce and therefore suffer a loss as a result of the price increases (Due, this volume). Herein lies a major difference between agriculturalists and pastoralists. Historically, even cattle pastoralists such as the Orma have consumed very little beef. In fact, cattle were typically slaughtered only prior to imminent death or for ceremonial occasions (weddings, Islamic holidays, and funerals). Even goats and sheep were slaughtered relatively rarely, usually in the dry season to supplement depleted milk yields. Only recently have some wealthy Orma households been consuming larger quantities of meat (usually sheep or goat), which they purchase by the kilogram from makeshift "butcheries." In other words, while poor pastoralists benefit from any increase in the price of meat to the producer, they are virtually unaffected by increases in the price of meat to consumers.

Those households which do purchase meat are most definitely net beneficiaries of higher prices, as they consume only a fraction of the increases they realize as producers. However, to the extent that the government's policy is consistent across grain and meat prices, pastoralists are affected

by increases in the price of grains and other regulated commodities. Table 12-1 provides data on changes in the terms of trade as they were experienced by the Galole Orma over the period from 1980 to 1987. While the government does not control the price paid to producers for cattle, it does control the price which may be charged to consumers, thus effectively accomplishing the same result for those sales which go through formal market channels. Table 12-1 demonstrates that overall the Orma have been net beneficiaries of a favorable turn in terms of trade between 1980 and 1987. While their main cash-earning commodity for sale (cattle) yielded 116 percent more in 1987 than 1980, their total consumer price index increased by 93 percent, and their food costs increased only 89 percent. Not coincidentally, the Kenyan shilling was devalued by exactly 100 percent over this same period. The result is a net gain in purchasing power of about 23 percent for the Orma.

Even a 23 percent increase in the terms of trade does not prepare us for the findings on household and per capita consumption in Table 12-2.

Table 12-1. Terms of Trade for the Galole Orma at Waya: 1980 to 1987 (in Kenyan Shillings).

	1980 (41 households)	1987 (104 households)	1980–87 % increase
Price to Orma Producers			
Cattle: 1–2 years	366 (n = 49)	787 (n = 150)	115%
Cattle: 3–4 years	753 (n = 64)	1741 (n = 27)	131%
Cattle: Over 5 years	988 (n = 74)	2072 (n = 47)	110%
Price to Orma Consumer			
Sugar (1 kg)	5	9	80%
Maize Flour (2 kg packet)	5	11	120%
Tea Leaves (50 g)	1/50	1/90	27%
Simsin Oil (700 ml)	12	16	33%
Rice (1 kg)	4	11	175%
Kanga Cloth	65	130	100%
Paraffin (700 ml)	3	6	100%
Exchange Rate			
One U.S. Dollar in Kenyan Shillings	8	16	100%
Increase in Cattle Prices Received by Orma Producers[a]			116%
Increase in All Commodity Costs to Orma Consumers[a]			93%
Increase in All Food Costs to Orma Consumers[a]			89%

a. Price indices are calculated on the basis of increase in prices weighted by the percentage of the household budget spent or received per commodity in 1987 (n = 127).

Here we see in the last entry at the bottom of the table that even poor households (the poorest one-third of the population based on wealth per capita of the household) have increased their total household consumption by 87 percent in real terms (1987 prices), while the figure is 125 percent for the middle third of the population and 39 percent for the richest third.[1]

It is important to note that I take increased consumption in real terms to be a sign of greater economic well-being. Expenditure increases in Table 12-2 are *after* inflation; thus they represent *real* increases in the level of consumption.[2] It is also my belief, having collected a great deal of household economic data, that expenditure reports are a more accurate reflection of household income than are income reports. Another way of interpreting these data, therefore, is to say that in 1987 households had significantly higher real incomes.

Having said this, however, it is equally important to stress that an increase in the percentage of the household budget spent upon food and even a real increase in food expenditures are not necessarily indicators of improvement in economic well-being. It is more likely in this case that they reflect a substitution of purchased foods for losses in subsistence production. For example, one might suspect that the large increase in purchased food in 1987 was due to the fact that 1987, although not a drought year, was a dry year and thus necessitated considerably higher food expenditures than would ordinarily be the case. However, 1980, the year of baseline comparison, was also a dry year. Much of the higher food expenditures by households in 1987 can be attributed to the fact that herd size (and thus milk yield) were substantially lower than in 1980, due to the relatively recent heavy losses of the 1985 drought. Increased sedentarization and resultant overgrazing also had a similar effect.

Several other peculiarities of the years 1980 and 1987 served to inflate the relative food expenditures for 1987. Especially since 1985, Galole households have periodically enjoyed substantial yields of maize from floodplain agriculture along the seasonal Galole River. Due to the dryness in 1987, no homegrown maize was being consumed throughout the duration of the survey period, thus resulting in higher than normal food expenditures. Finally, 1980 was a year of exceptional food shortages of all major food commodities—maize flour, rice, and sugar. In fact, from July to October 1980, food was frequently rationed and almost never were all three staples available at the same time.[3] This most certainly depressed food expenditures during that survey period and to some degree the increased expenditures in 1987 probably do actually reflect higher caloric intake.

Table 12-2. Mean Consumption Expenditures Per Capita for Three-Village Sunset: 1980 and 1987 (in 1987 Kenyan Shillings).

	Poor		Middle		Rich	
	1980	1987	1980	1987	1980	1987
Number of Households[a]	17	46	11	35	28	26
Mean Size of Household	8.4	8.1	10.0	10.3	12.4	16.4
Total Food Consumption[b]	472	1,047	463	1,156	585	963
Food as % of Total	56.7%	67.3%	57.1%	63.3%	43.3%	59.5%
Sugar	169	219	169	234	198	218
Flour	106	450	99	479	88	370
Tea & Ginger	62	90	60	92	74	96
Oil	33	180	29	204	25	183
Rice	58	43	66	60	88	59
Other Food	44	65	40	87	32	37
Total Non-Food Consumption[c]	360	509	348	670	660	656
Household	98	142	96	165	142	150
Clothing	144	158	172	239	290	241
Other Non-Food	118	209	80	266	228	265
Total Consumption	832	1556	811	1826	1165	1619
Real % Change 1980–87						
Food	+122%		+150%		+91%	
Non-Food	+41%		+93%		–1%	
Total Consumption	+87%		+125%		+39%	

a. The samples sizes within wealth categories do not appear to agree (given household size) with the definitional breakdown of these groups into thirds of the population. The reason for this is that the wealth groups are defined on the basis of the full Galole sample in 1979 (n = 174 of 230) and the same population again in 1987 (n = 203 of 230), while the data in these tables come from only three villages (1979 n = 56; 1987 n = 107). A disproportionately large number of wealthy households lived in these villages in 1979, thus accounting for the large sample size of rich households, while the wealth of households in these villages in 1987 was far more representative of the population at large as measured by wealth. See Table 12-3 for a comparison of means of wealth per capita between the two samples.

b. In order to maximize comparability between survey periods, a few relatively insignificant food items were omitted from these data. Thus they do not fully represent total food consumption. They are, however, complete for the commodities listed.

c. These data exclude contributions to the mosque, *harambee* projects, gifts, and some insignificant miscellaneous items not surveyed identically in 1979 and 1987. In general, such expenditures were far higher in 1987 than in 1980, and were they included here they would strengthen the trend reported.

However one wishes to interpret the data on food consumption, it is clear from the data on non-food consumption that all but the rich in 1987 were consuming a great deal more in real terms of less essential commodities than they were in 1980 (41 percent more for poor and 93 percent more for middle households). Given these data, I conclude that the average poor and middle households were better off economically in 1987 than they were in 1980, and further, that this was not due entirely to a favorable turn in terms of trade for livestock in relation to grain and other commodity prices.

It is worth noting that this finding is all the more unexpected, as 1987 was a brief two years after an extremely serious drought in which the Orma lost 70 percent of their cattle. Nineteen-eighty, on the other hand, had been a full five years after a similarly serious drought in which the Orma also lost nearly 70 percent of their stock. This is reflected in Table 12-3, which shows the mean 1979 and 1987 stock holdings per capita for both the entire Galole sample and the three-village subset reported in Table 12-2. Per capita holdings declined on average 35 percent for the original full Galole sample from 1979 to 1987.

Table 12-3 also provides data on a comparison of means between the Galole population at large and the three-village subset whose consumption is reported in Table 12-2. With one exception, the means of wealth per capita by wealth group are extremely close, indicating that the sample subset is not biased on the most crucial variable. The exception occurs among the poor in 1979 (1.41 TLU per capita for the subset versus 1.17 TLU for the full sample), indicating that they are considerably wealthier than the "poor" population at large. However, since consumption is positively correlated with wealth, the bias goes against the direction of the findings reported here. In other words, had the poor sample in 1979 been more representative of the poor at large, we would have expected to find an even larger increase in their consumption between 1980 and 1987.

Another possible explanation for the trend of increased consumption seen in these data would be selective migration out of the area by poor households between the two survey periods. Indeed, there was a substantial migration in and out of the 15 by 20 mile survey area around Wayu. For the most part, these moves were precipitated by the 1985 drought and follow the pattern noted years ago by Barth (1961), whereby poor pastoralists settle in urban areas in times of stress. To control for this phenomenon, the "full Galole sample" data in Table 12-3 are based upon actual and, where necessary, estimated wealth per capita of the original 1979 sample population again in 1987, including those who migrated

Table 12-3. Mean Wealth Per Capita in Tropical Livestock Units[a] by Wealth of Household for Full Galole Sample and Three-Village Subset: 1979 and 1987.

	Poor		Middle		Rich	
	TLU	n	TLU	n	TLU	n
1979 Full Galole Sample	1.17	58	4.01	57	11.51	59
1979 Three-Village Subset	1.41	17	3.96	11	11.75	28
1987 Full Galole Sample[b]	0.64	80	2.05	72	8.15	51
1987 Three-Village Subset	0.64	46	2.02	35	8.25	26

a. A tropical livestock unit is equivalent to one head of cattle. Sheep and goats in 1979 were converted at 6 to 1, while in 1987 they were converted at 5 to 1, consistent with local exchange values.

b. The 1987 data for the full Galole sample are for the original population resident in the area in 1979, rather than the population within the survey area in 1987, in order to control for selective in-and-out migration. The three-village subset, however, is based upon actual residents in those villages over time. For many households which migrated out of the survey area, the chief's estimates of household size and wealth were used. In six cases where surveys of such households were later carried out, his estimates agreed quite closely with the actual surveys.

out of the survey area. In-migrants are not included in the 1987 data for the full Galole sample. The fact that the three-village subset (including in-migrants) still closely resembles the original sample reflects the fact that the small market towns represented in that sample are like mid-way stations in the process of in-and-out migration, and the wealth of those migrating in and out of these villages is relatively close. I am satisfied that the data are not confounded by either sampling bias or selective migration.

As further documentation that the well-being of the population may actually have improved between 1979 and 1987, I include 1987 data on weight per height by gender, age group, and type of residence (Table 12-4). Weight per height is regarded as a relatively good proxy for nutritional status. As there has been a significant transition to residence in market towns over time (from 39 to 63 percent of the population), roughly corresponding to the shift from nomadism to sedentarism, these data may be indicative of the longitudinal trend. We find a statistically significant improvement for both male adults and male children, comparing the mean weight per height of the bush and market-town samples. For females (both children and adults) there is no statistically significant difference. Thus, while we may conclude from these data that there is some

Table 12-4. Mean Weight Per Height[a] for 1987 Resident Galole Survey by Type of Residence, Gender, Age Category, and Wealth of Household.

	Males		Females	
	Age 2–18	Age 19+	Age 2–18	Age 19+
Market Town	0.182[b] (n = 266)	0.333[c] (n = 158)	0.188[d] (n = 261)	0.308[e] (n = 191)
Bush	0.170 (n = 105)	0.319 (n = 57)	0.185 (n = 98)	0.307) (n = 84)

a. Within age/gender categories a higher ratio of weight to height is generally indicative of better nutritional well-being; women's ratios are typically lower than men's. Comparative ratios from Turkana pastoral nomads are 0.331 for adult men and 0.302 for adult women and 3.31 for adult women (Galvin 1985: 232).

b. A difference of means T-Test for market town versus bush male children is significant at the 0.0001 level.

c. A difference of means T-Test for market town versus bush male adults is significant at the 0.0001 level.

d. There is no statistically significant difference between market town and bush female children.

e. There is no statistically significant difference between market town and bush female adults.

support for improved nutritional well-being of males in all age groups as a result of town residence, there is no change, for better or worse, for females.

In summary, I would argue that several economic and anthropometric indices bear out my impressionistic observations of economic change among the Galole Orma between 1980 and 1987, namely, that on average even the poor were at least slightly better off in 1987 than they had been in 1980. I do not conclude, however, that these tendencies can be attributed entirely to the effect of structural adjustment policies affecting agricultural prices, though a 23 percent favorable turn in terms of trade may account for about half of the improvement for the poor.

To a certain extent, the improved economic circumstances are attributable to increased government expenditures which have created some employment for the Galole. For example, the few Orma with secondary education are employed as clerks and schoolteachers. The government has also employed Galole on construction and road building projects. However, much of the increase in construction employment can be traced to increased trade and commerce rather than government building. For

example, there is a local stone quarry in Wayu which supplies building stones for construction to the district headquarters. Many poor and some rich households have members who earn considerable incomes there. While some stones are used for government buildings, most are used in the construction of new shops and private residences in the district headquarters.

Perhaps more significant to the Orma economy than any other single change is the opening of new livestock markets (at Kitui and Bengal) paying approximately 30 percent more in 1987 than the Orma's traditional coastal market. The Orma sell stock to middlemen and do not always know the final destination of their stock. However, it was reported to me that the higher prices offered by the two new markets resulted from the fact that these stock were destined for export to the Middle East via Nairobi. If this is the case, the higher prices offered there since 1984 could be the direct result of Kenyan currency devaluations, which have the effect of making exports more competitive.

The increased competition of two new cattle markets has also had enormous secondary consequences. By breaking the virtual monopsony (i.e., presence of one buyer) of one coastal Arab trader, more local Galole have been able to get involved in livestock trading. Consequently, more of the money from such trade is staying in the district and helping to fuel the development of many service industries. For example, when I left Galole in 1981 there were no tea kiosks in Wayu Boro. I returned in 1987 to find not one, but six! One of these is owned and operated by a woman, while women operate all of the others and manage them together with their husbands.

Another small example of the increased specialization and division of labor is that one finds wealthy households now more typically buying handicrafts that they previously produced for themselves. Similarly, specialized traders in tobacco, miraa, and skins have developed.

All of the new sources of cash income (from casual labor, civil service jobs, livestock trading, commerce, and service industries) pay a special dividend for the poor, who are now no longer dependent upon shopkeepers for all of their cash needs and have to a great extent managed to free themselves from much of the debt bondage to shopkeepers which existed in 1980. Previously, those who took credit at a shop had to trade their livestock there or risk losing their credit in the future. Effective interest rates were 60 percent per season if one compared the prices the shops paid for livestock to those received by households who sold directly to outside traders (Ensminger 1984: 120).

Obviously not all of these changes can be attributed merely to increased government expenditure and currency devaluation. They also stem in part from an institutional structure which is facilitating the development of trade, increasing specialization, and the division of labor, which are essential to economic take-off (North 1981, 1990; Ensminger 1990). The government's recent effort toward administrative decentralization is but one example of such institutional change, and I turn now to an examination of this policy.

District Development Focus: Decentralization 1983–1987

On July 1, 1983, the Kenyan government launched a major governmental decentralization initiative described in what has come to be known as the "Blue Book" (Government of Kenya 1987). The 1970s had seen much lip-service paid to attempts to decentralize the government bureaucracy (Rondinelli et al. 1984:30; Oyugi 1983), but unlike these earlier attempts, what happened in 1983 had an impact in the rural area. The difference may be due to President Moi's political motivations and consequent commitment to the initiatives, which resulted in far greater attention to the undertaking than had previously been the case. The stated objective of district development focus was to move the center for much development decision-making closer to the respective recipients. It also meant that initiatives for rural development were expected to come more from below than had previously been the case.

A further, though often unstated, goal of the policy was to return to the districts more responsibility for the maintenance of development projects once begun. This meant a reversal of the long-standing national policy of taking over successful locally initiated projects (*harambee* schools, for instance) and in future leaving the maintenance of such development efforts more in the hands of the district. This was necessitated because districts had learned from past experience that the best strategy for getting more funds from the government was to initiate as many projects as possible to the required level of functioning and then petition for government takeover. The government eventually found that the recurrent costs of this policy were far too great. It also took too long for projects to become fully functional, and thus resources were being tied up inefficiently in projects dangling for years in various stages of half-completion (Alan Johnston, Ministry of Finance and Planning, personal communication).

An obvious danger of decentralization to poorer districts such as Tana

River is that it will lead to less redistribution from central government funds. This of course presupposes that such redistribution existed in the past. On the positive side, decentralization has been argued to increase responsiveness to local needs and to lead to greater political equality and leadership training (see Smith 1985:Chapter 2 for a review of these and other arguments). Decentralization also alters who wields power (Smith 1985:206), and thus its effect upon women has a great deal to do with women's position vis à vis the previous political structure. In the next two sections of the chapter I review how the Orma experience with decentralization has affected women in these critical areas.

A New District Focus: Effects upon Redistribution and Responsiveness to Local Needs

One of the most striking changes I noted upon return to the Orma in 1987 was the degree of commitment the population expressed for local fund-raising initiatives. While numerous fund-raising efforts were imposed upon the Orma between 1978 and 1981, they were almost invariably in support of projects in different districts. Typically, the provincial commissioner or the district commissioner (always from outside the district), would organize *harambee* (self-help) fund-raising drives in support of projects in their home districts. The pressure put upon local chiefs (the local governmental representative in remote rural areas) to raise funds for such foreign projects was enormous. Chiefs were typically assigned a quota for collection. By 1987, this practice had altered dramatically. Since the beginning of "district focus" in 1983, not one collection for outside the district was undertaken in the Wayu area, although the chief acknowledged that receipt books for external collections were still piling up in his office. The difference was that the Orma could now argue that collections for other districts were incompatible with the ideology of "district focus." Over and over again one heard the words "district focus" spoken with a nationalistic-like fervor. For the first time the local community had a pride in building for its own development. Needless to say, contributions increased substantially.

Local fund-raising drives in rural areas such as Tana River are a major means of taxation in Kenya. The Orma pay no official income taxes to the central government, although there are taxes on commercial transactions. Many of the funds for basic social services such as school buildings, therefore, must come from the initiative of the local community, although the government picks up the costs of paying the teachers and staff. Such funds are collected in a highly formalized manner, however, representing a system quite close to an income tax, albeit a relatively regressive one. For

example, the elders, together with the chief, agree upon appropriate levels of payments for each household based upon their wealth in livestock. For a major school fund-raising drive in 1987, for example, the tax rate schedule was as shown in Table 12-5. Should a household resist paying, the chief exercised such sanctions as were at his disposal; the compliance rate was very high.

Table 12-6 provides data on one of the outcomes of the fund-raising efforts. When I left the Galole Orma in 1981 there was only one primary school then serving the population of approximately 2,400. During my absence a neighboring village had just completed a substantial fund-raising and was in the process of constructing a high-quality permanent school building. Enrollment of school-age boys increased between 1979 and 1987 from 26 percent to 50 percent. Even more impressive, while only 4 percent of school-age girls were enrolled in 1979, that figure rose to 30 percent in 1987. The chief notes that the addition of new classrooms, facilitated by *harambee* contributions, was essential to his being able to put pressure upon households to send their female children to school.

In addition to the positive effect that district focus had upon local development initiatives, there were many signs that central government expenditures had also increased. For example, Table 12-6 also provides data on adult education participation, which is a program begun in Wayu town in 1983 and funded entirely by the central government. The striking finding here is that it is the women, not the men, who are the most keen participants. While 26 men in the survey reported some participation in the program, 47 women had participated. Far more striking was the fact that only 1 male from Wayu town was continuing his adult education, while 31 adult Wayu women (41 percent of those in the town where it is offered) continued in the program. One of the reasons women are so anxious to study is because they have learned that lack of fluency in

Table 12-5. Structure of 1987 *Harambee* Tax Contributions in Galole by Wealth of Household.

Wealth of Household in Cattle	Type of Contribution	Value of Contribution (in Kenyan Shillings)
200+	Large Sanga Male	2500/=
80–200	Hawicha Female	1500/= to 2000/=
50–80	Cash	1000/=
30–50	Gabicha Male	500/=
1–20	Cash	100/= to 150/=
No Stock	Cash	10/= to 20/=

Table 12-6. Education by Gender for Resident Galole Sample 1979 and 1987.

	Males		Females	
	1979	1987	1979	1987
Some Schooling	119	253	13	132
As Percent of Pop. over Age 6	17%	30%	2%	18%
In School	82	158	9	84
As Percent of Pop. Age 7–16	26%	50%	4%	30%
Some Adult Education	0	26	0	47
As Percent of Pop. Over Age 18[a]		12%		19%
In Adult Education	0	1	0	31
As Percent of Pop. Over Age 18[b]		2%		41%

a. Adult education was originally offered in two villages. This figure represents the percentage of the population age 18 and above with some adult education for those two villages.

b. The adult literacy program was offered in only one village in 1987. These figures represent the proportion of the population age 18 and above continuing in adult education in that village.

Swahili and illiteracy have disadvantaged them in the courts and in promoting their interests through government channels.

Table 12-7 provides data on vaccination histories for children in the Galole area. At the time of my departure in 1981, only sporadic mobile vaccination campaigns had taken place. In the early 1980s, however, a major vaccination program through the permanent dispensary in Wayu town was initiated. Several findings surface from the inoculation data. First, there appears to be considerable diligence on the part of the population to see series of vaccinations through to their completion, as evidenced in DPT and polio vaccinations, which require two and three return visits respectively at specified intervals. Second, it is worth noting that no discrimination against female children exists such that males are more likely to be vaccinated than females.

Other government efforts of note during this time period include the upgrading of several significant roads in the area. This has considerable import for the quality of life of the population, as food shortages are common during the rainy season when roads are typically washed out in this flood-prone district.

Another of the most beneficial outcomes of the bureaucratic decentralization has been the effort to upgrade the level of civil servants in all ministries in the rural areas. This did not mean an expansion of the civil service but rather the posting of civil servants out of urban areas and into the

Table 12-7. Frequency of Vaccinations for Galole Survey by Gender: All Children Age 0–16 in 1987.

		n	No Vacc	1 Vacc	2 Vacc	3 Vacc	4 Vacc
DPT	Male	351	135 (38.5%)	17 (4.8%)	14 (4.0%)	185 (52.7%)	—
	Female	333	124 (37.2%)	20 (6.0%)	14 (4.2%)	175 (52.6%)	—
Polio	Male	351	133 (37.9%)	9 (2.6%)	13 (3.7%)	26 (7.4%)	170 (48.4%)
	Female	334	127 (38.0%)	15 (4.5%)	18 (5.4%)	31 (9.3%)	143 (42.8%)

rural areas where they could be most effective—no small accomplishment in any African bureaucracy. From the schools, to the dispensary, to the district development office, both the numbers and the qualifications of civil servants were increased in the mid-1980s.

The mid-1980s brought many new civil servants to Wayu, the center of Galole. For instance, while in 1980 one almost never saw a veterinary officer even visit the remote Galole area, in 1987 one was actually permanently posted there. The government also built an impressive house for the local nurse who attends at the dispensary. The better accommodation allowed for the posting of a far more qualified health officer. An assistant nurse was also brought permanently, thus ensuring that the dispensary could remain open when the nurse left for leave or to collect medicine. The number of administrative police in the area was also increased fourfold, thus contributing to greater security in an area continuously plagued by bandit attacks.

Finally, perhaps the single most significant activity of the government during this period was the provision of famine relief during the 1985 drought. Famine relief has been functioning intermittently in the Galole area since colonial times, but households noted with considerable appreciation that the effort in 1985 was one of the best organized and most responsive. While the initial shipments could certainly have been used two months earlier, once begun, they were both sufficient and timely, and continued for over a year at a significant level. The local chief's correspondence files clearly document the government's responsiveness. Maize sometimes arrived as quickly as five days after the request was communicated. There is no question but that the effort was more responsive than that during the 1974 drought.

In summary, it does not appear that the policy of decentralization has imposed costs on the Orma population generally or women specifically. On the contrary, given that in the past the Galole probably made a net contribution to other districts, usually substantially wealthier ones, the policy has actually improved the situation from the point of view of redis-

tribution. Meanwhile, the ideology of "building for local development" has thus far helped raise an unprecedented amount of funds for local schools.

A word of caution is in order, however, regarding the future allocation of central government funds. It remains to be seen whether the government will continue to distribute its own funds in ever more generous amounts to districts such as Tana River. It has been suggested, for example (personal communication from sources in the Ministry of Finance and Planning), that the decentralization initiative, by placing the burden for initiation and maintenance of development projects upon the local areas, could be setting the way for a more focused use of national development resources in those areas where the economic return is likely to be highest—in other words, the high-potential agricultural areas. Should this be the case, and should resources be taken out of social services such as veterinary services, rural dispensaries, and schools, the Orma could yet see a decline in their area—both relatively and absolutely.

Political Equality and Leadership Training for Orma Women

I will close the section on the effects of decentralization with a brief discussion of what it has meant to women to bring the locus of decision-making closer to the rural areas. In theory, it is fair to assume that those most excluded from the upper echelons of power would be benefited by efforts that succeed in moving the level of real decision-making down the power hierarchy. It remains to be seen whether or not district focus will succeed in this, one of its stated objectives. In theory, however, it is hard to imagine that women would not be positively affected by such a change. The closer the political process gets to the rural village, which Galole women rarely leave, the more potential one would predict women have to make a real contribution.

There are very small signs that this is beginning to happen. It is mandated by the government, for instance, that women be included on local development committees. This committee meets in the chief's office in the small village of Wayu in the heart of Galole.

To my surprise, upon checking the minutes of meetings held in the mid-1980s, I did find women in attendance as members of the committee. Of 25 present at one meeting, 9 were women. At that meeting, when the members were asked to propose projects, the women spoke up in favor of a local nursery school and more resources for the dispensary. Both motions were acted upon by the committee.

Between 1980 and 1987 there was also a noticeable increase in the presence of women at village meetings (local *barazas*) organized by the chief. While most women even in 1987 still played only a limited role in these public forums, they were at least getting access to information, which is certainly a necessary step in the direction of exercising power.

In conclusion, I would say that decentralization in theory promises tremendous benefits for women, who have historically been excluded from the centers of power in virtually all societies. By the same token, one may wonder how long such a system will last once those to whom authority has been delegated begin to use it for purposes not to the liking of those who still retain the power to again change the institutional structure.

Conclusion

We should all be cheered by the fact that the Orma bring some good news to the subject of development and structural transformation in Africa. However, it is important to carry away the correct interpretations from these findings. While there are certainly lessons for Africa in the specific Orma and Kenyan experiences, it is also important to note the ways in which this case study may not be generalizable.

First of all, not all of Kenya has benefited from economic improvement in the 1980s. One need only look to the Orma's neighbors, the agricultural Pokomo, to find a people whose economic fortunes appear to have declined considerably over this period. In the case of the Pokomo, a major contributing factor has been the damming of the Tana River, which has substantially reduced the seasonal floods upon which the Pokomo depend for their livelihood. It would be premature to make the case that either the Orma or the Pokomo or some other experience is the more typical one for Kenya. Only more case studies with longitudinal data will resolve this. Second, the Kenyan experience itself is not typical for Africa. Due to a history of *relatively* good economic management, Kenya never fell to the depths that most other African nations experienced by the late 1970s. Consequently, the structural adjustment policies which Kenya has implemented are not nearly as harsh as those of other nations such as Nigeria and Tanzania. We must be most cautious, therefore, in generalizing from a positive experience in Kenya, to the very dissimilar conditions which brought very different policy prescriptions to places like Nigeria and Tanzania.

While the Orma case study may not be typical of the rest of Africa at the present time, one might hope that there are lessons in it which may be *transferable.* Both the Orma and the Kenyan experience generally have

much to teach us about the factors which facilitate structural transformation. First of all, increasing prices to producers has made a difference, but it is not the whole story. Obviously this policy also needs to be weighed by planners against the hardship imposed at the other end, that is, to the consumers. Second, in the Orma case governmental institutional development appears to be crucial to the proliferation of trade and commerce, which finally took off in the mid-1980s to the point that it generated significant economic diversification. While many Orma are still terribly poor, their condition is somewhat improved by the new employment prospects afforded by this increasing diversification and division of labor. As the Orma experience with the tea kiosks indicates, such diversification need not exclude women, even in a Muslim society. The current decentralization initiative which the Kenyan government has embarked upon is but the most recent example of institutional change which appears to be paying off in the rural sector. Other African nations might do well to study this experiment.

NOTES

1. Due to the large difference in household size between poor (8.1 persons) and rich (16.4 persons) households, it takes many more poor households to make up the bottom third of the population. The divisions represented here, however, are based upon percent of the population, not percent of households, as was the case in Ensminger 1984. This makes a significant difference in the analysis, as the richest third of households actually represents 50 percent of the population.
2. The case I am making here, that increased *real* expenditures are a reflection of economic well-being rather than deterioration, does not contradict the argument made by others in this volume, that *inflated* prices have brought economic hardship to women in many areas as a result of structural adjustment. In those cases, income has not kept up with inflation, which consequently has lead to a *real* decline in consumption.
3. A general note regarding the policy of "getting prices right" is in order. To the extent that government-controlled prices of grains are so low that they depress production (as argued by many, including Bates 1981), one must consider *upon whom* the resultant shortages are most likely to fall. In 1980 Kenya suffered severe shortages of maize flour, the nation's primary subsistence crop. While the proximate cause for this shortfall was drought that year, one could argue that had production been higher in good years, reserves might also have been higher. Equally, had prices been higher, black-market exports to neighboring countries might have been reduced. Whatever the real cause, it was clear in Tana River that year that pastoral areas, some of the nation's poorest, were some of the last to get grain shipments during times of scarcity. Within the district, it was the poor who were the last to get access to supplies during rationing. With little question, even the poor would have preferred to pay higher prices for maize flour to ensure supply rather than go without, as they often had to do that year. I would stress that the economically and politically weak, among which groups we often find women, are likely to be the first to suffer during times of scarcity.

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