

# The Invisible Violence That Follows: The Effects of Drought on Children, Kinship, & Gender In Tanzania

By  
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## **Abstract**

Tanzania is considered to be food self-sufficient at the national level, but in recent years, food deficits are becoming more apparent at regional and household levels. This can be attributed to an over reliance on rain-dependent agriculture while the country is experiencing recurring droughts. This over-reliance on rain-dependent agriculture coupled with climate change has been considered one of Tanzania's greatest challenges in poverty reduction and alleviation. Yet, droughts do not affect all populations to the same degree. Because clinicians "medicalize" symptoms of malnutrition and food insecurity, we typically tend to think of young children and the elderly as being the most vulnerable to drought. I investigate how droughts impact adolescents in Tanzania and argue that they face a set of unique challenges influenced by kinship and gender-based power structures that devastatingly disrupt their childhood and socialization, which has consequences not only at the individual level but also at the societal level as well. I discover that droughts are inflicting slow violence in Tanzania, and boys and girls are being affected in different ways. Consequently children are adopting different survival strategies in hopes of resisting the hardship associated with droughts. This element of survival is a double sword that improves children's economic situations immediately but makes them vulnerable simultaneously.

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## Chapter 1

### Introduction

In the past decade Tanzania and East Africa has experienced a series of devastating droughts (Wainaina, 2017) that are exacerbating inequities in all facets of life. Tanzania is considered to be food self-sufficient at the national level. In recent years, however, food deficits are becoming more apparent at regional and household levels, as more than one-third of the population fails to meet its daily caloric needs (Alphonse, 2017). This is a result of high levels of poverty in rural areas, poor infrastructure such as roads, and an over-reliance on rain-dependent agriculture while the country is experiencing prolonged periods of drought, ultimately resulting in water shortages and low productivity (Arndt, Farmer, Strzepek, & Thurlow, 2012). This over-reliance on rain-dependent agriculture coupled with climate change has been considered one of Tanzania's greatest challenges in poverty reduction and alleviation ("Heifer Tanzania," n.d.). Severe weather events such as droughts adversely affect the development, growth, and well-being of children by interfering with infrastructure, crop yields, livestock and water systems (*United Nations Children's Fund [UNICEF]*, 2015; Masih, Maskey, Mussá, & Trambauer, 2014). Further, droughts can lead to food insecurity and increased food prices (*UNICEF*, 2015).

Yet, droughts do not affect all populations to the same degree. Typically the most vulnerable populations are young children, the elderly and those of low socioeconomic status, as they do not have the means or resources to meet their own needs. Nevertheless, the vulnerability of adolescent youth is often overlooked because they have stronger immune systems compared to young children and the elderly, and are physically capable

of working. Droughts are inflicting slow and structural violence in Tanzania, and boys and girls are being affected in different ways. Consequently children are adopting different survival strategies in hopes of resisting the hardship associated with droughts.

This thesis asks, how do droughts impact adolescents in Tanzania? I argue that adolescents face unique challenges that devastatingly disrupt cultural norms surrounding kinship and childhood. This disruption has consequences not only at the individual level but at the societal level as well. Where drought zones overlap with areas of high poverty lie the most vulnerable individuals with an already limited access to essential resources (*UNICEF*, 2015). As stated by UNICEF (2015), “This can create a vicious cycle: a child living in poverty or deprived of adequate water and sanitation before a crisis will be more affected by a flood, drought or storm, less likely to recover quickly and at even greater risk in a subsequent crisis” (p. 8).

Most of the literature about the direct impacts of droughts on children pertains to health specifically; in other words, too often clinicians “medicalize” symptoms of malnutrition and food insecurity. Mauro (2012) defines medicalization as, “the process by which some aspects of human life come to be considered as medical problems, whereas before they were not considered pathological” (p. 123). Therefore, the impact of drought, famine and food security is too often assessed in terms of biology and what is lost in the process is the significance of these circumstances on social life. I aim to show that the effects of droughts go far beyond health and how droughts have transformed or redefined what it means to be a child. I discuss examples and elaborate on how droughts disrupt the socialization process and kinship power structures. In addition, I also explore

how droughts affect social experiences related to gender and how children navigate the  
aforementioned power structures.

## Chapter 2

### Background

#### A. Tanzania Country Information

Tanzania is situated on the coast of East Africa and has a population of roughly fifty-four million people (Central Intelligence Agency [CIA], n.d.). The country's 365,756 square miles are divided into thirty-one 'mkoa' or regions. Those thirty-one 'mkoa' are then further divided into 169 'wilaya' or districts, thirty-four being 'mijini' or urban in nature and the remaining being 'vijijini' or rural. The urban districts are then divided into 'mtaa' and the rural districts into 'vintonaji', which are smaller municipalities, villages, wards, and neighborhoods (*National Bureau of Statistics*, n.d). With each degree of separation there is a decrease in national government intervention and involvement, such as resource allocation, security, emergency services, disaster response, food aid, alleviation of poverty, and health and human rights. Although the population is roughly fifty-four million, thirty-four percent of the population is between the ages of five and eighteen (*National Bureau of Statistics*, 2013). This is significant to this study because their vulnerability to drought is not being taken as serious as other population groups. Yet, they make up the greatest segment of the population. Seventy percent of the population occupies rural spaces, and the population density in Tanzania varies from 'mtaa' to 'mtaa,' or neighborhood to neighborhood (*National Bureau of Statistics*, 2013). This also is very significant to the study as the rural population is the most reliant on rain-fed agriculture, and they make up nearly three-quarters of the entire population. The combination of a large percentage of the population being young, in addition to residing in rural areas renders Tanzania as a unique place to study the effects



of drought on children and to understand how this may complicate life for future generations.

Based on the human development index that assesses poverty, Tanzania ranks poorly at 151 out of 187 in developing countries. This poor ranking is attributed to nearly forty-seven percent of Tanzanians living below the poverty line with average incomes of 4,300 shillings (\$1.90) per day and seventy-three percent with incomes of 7,016 shillings (\$3.10) per day (*United Nations Development Programme* [UNDP], 2016). Additionally, malnourishment and chronic hunger are disproportionately impacting children in rural communities (Alphonse, 2017; *UNDP*, n.d.).

Agriculture is the most common source of income and livelihood for rural individuals in Tanzania. Agriculture not only provides income to purchase food but also makes food readily available for consumption (Slavchevska, 2015). One study indicated that a drought year could diminish a household's income by 26%. (Singh, Feroze, & Ray, 2013) In retrospect this could mean that those individuals who were living off of \$1.90 a day would now have to meet their needs with only \$1.40 a day.

## **B. Drought**

A drought is in essence a period of time with below-average to non-existent precipitation in an area, persisting from weeks to years (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). It is understood that droughts are caused by the EL Niño phenomenon, which is associated with the ocean and atmosphere. This weather pattern is characterized by the annual warming of the ocean's surface temperatures and has been tied to the changes in the distribution of precipitation in East Africa, among other places (*National Weather Service*, 2006). El Niño is not known to be caused by climate change but is worsening

because of it (*United Nations office for the Coordination of Human Affairs* [OCHA], n.d.).

Droughts adversely affect the water supply of living things, not exclusive to humans. It is important to note that human activity has been known to worsen the effects of drought via excessive farming, deforestation, irrigation, dam construction, and controversially, greenhouse gas emissions (*United Nations Human Settlements Programme*, 2006; UNICEF, 2015). All of these examples negatively affect the land's capability of retaining water (Belfast Telegraph, 2008; "Deforestation Exacerbates Droughts," 2006).

Droughts have serious repercussions that are divided into three categories: environmental, economic, and social. Environmental impacts include but are not limited to the increased occurrence and size of fires, low water-levels, pollution of surface water, and loss of biodiversity. Economic repercussions include decreases in tourism, high-food production costs and decreased agricultural and fishing production (Prokurat, 2015). Typically, discourse about drought is often limited to biology, economics and environmental degradation, and what is overlooked in the process is the impacts of drought on social life. Evidently, droughts have an array of negative outcomes.

In the last sixty years East Africa has experienced over thirty droughts. Records show specifically that Tanzania has suffered from eleven droughts (Masih et al., 2014). From the data, I observed an increasing trend in frequency. Today droughts occur more than three times as often than they did fifty-sixty years ago. In addition, in recent years the intensity, and duration of droughts have been increasing. The droughts don't appear to follow a particular pattern in terms of intensity but are reoccurring because of El Niño.

There are some parts of Tanzania that are more prone to drought including the Northern and central regions specifically Dodoma, Singinda, and Tabora (*Swiss Re*, n.d.).

It is estimated that the livelihoods of up to seventy percent of Tanzanians are dependent upon agriculture (Hilse, 2017). A cattle breeder from a central-northern region in Tanzania explains the harsh realities of the drought he experienced in early 2017: “Our livestock has completely lost its value, because the animals are so emaciated” (Hilse, 2017). In 2017 many nations in East Africa were near the threshold for famine, which is defined as a widespread scarcity of food (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). Because Tanzania reached crisis conditions midway through last year, its inhabitants were forced to skip meals, reduce portions, search for alternative forms of employment and sell household assets (*Lutheran World Relief*, 2017). Drought severity is assessed in phases. Crisis conditions are synonymous to phase three, while phase four suggests emergency conditions, and phase five indicates famine conditions<sup>1</sup> (Mugabi, 2017; *Famine Early Warning Systems Network*, 2017). In the past few years it has not been uncommon for

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<sup>1</sup> **Phase 1** (Minimal) – More than four in five households (HHs) are able to meet essential food and nonfood needs without engaging in atypical, unsustainable strategies to access food and income.

**Phase 2 (Stressed)** – Even with any humanitarian assistance at least one in five HHs in the area have the following or worse: Minimally adequate food consumption but are unable to afford some essential non food expenditures without engaging in irreversible coping strategies.

**Phase 3** (Crisis) – Even with any humanitarian assistance at least one in five HHs in the area have the following or worse:

- Food consumption gaps with high or above usual acute malnutrition

OR

- Are marginally able to meet minimum food needs only with accelerated depletion of livelihood assets that will lead to food consumption gaps.

**Phase 4** (Emergency) – Even with any humanitarian assistance at least one in five HHs in the area have the following or worse:

- Large food consumption gaps resulting in very high acute malnutrition and excess mortality

OR

- Extreme loss of livelihood assets that will lead to food consumption gaps in the short term.

**Phase 5** (Famine) – Even with any humanitarian assistance at least one in five HHs in the area have an extreme lack of food and other basic needs where starvation, death, and destitution are evident. Evidence for all three criteria (food consumption, acute malnutrition, and mortality) is required to classify Famine.

people to migrate from phase four and phase five nations such as Burundi, Somalia, and Ethiopia to nations experiencing phase three conditions such as Tanzania and Kenya (Prestetun , 2017).

In terms of drought and children, the East Africa drought of 2011, which is just one of many significant and recent droughts, caused a substantial food crisis that reshaped the lives of many children, who were then subjected to abuse, exposed to violence, forced to beg for food, partake in hazardous employment, drop out of school or to migrate (*UNICEF*, 2015). Additionally, droughts can exacerbate inequities, causing a disadvantageous cycle for individuals living in disenfranchised rural communities. I discuss the impacts of drought in depth in the context of kinship and gender.

## Chapter 3

### Methodology & Significance

#### A. Methodology

The design I employ is a literature review divided into three main parts to understand: (1) how kinship shapes relationships of power in Tanzania and how droughts may dismantle them, (2) how children are socialized and how droughts may disrupt that process, and (3) the gendered effects of drought on children's lives and the strategies they employ to navigate imbalanced power relationships to mitigate their vulnerability. I have incorporated ethnographic accounts from other theses, dissertations, and ethnographies, as well as articles and books from various scholars spanning across various fields such as anthropology, sociology, education, women & gender studies, and public health.

I also draw from my own experiences in which I travelled to Tanzania in 2015 and 2017. In 2015 I spent two weeks in rural Tanzania in a medical setting. In 2017 I spent three months in Arusha, Tanzania learning the Kiswahili language and living in a homestay with five other children ranging from 4 to 15 years old.

Lastly I performed a contextual analysis by gathering primary sources such as online news articles, reports, films and other first-hand accounts in popular literature to understand how kinship and gender ideologies directly affect young people's ability to navigate survival, and exacerbate inequalities. The main participants in this study are young children ages five to eighteen as the literature consisted of many studies of this population.

I have employed these techniques in order to understand Tanzanian kinship systems, gender roles, and expectations as they pertain to drought:

- i. What are the cultural ideas about family, gender, and youth in Tanzania?
- ii. How do kinship and gender ideologies influence power relationships in Tanzania?
- iii. How do people navigate these kinship and gender-based ideologies in periods of drought?
- iv. How does drought redefine what it means to be a child?
- v. How do boys experience drought in comparison to girls?
- vi. How does a drought inflict violence?

## **B. Significance**

My thesis has the potential to complicate how droughts are perceived and what they mean to different people. More importantly, the research can provide insight into which populations are at risk the most by highlighting some of the social effects of droughts. Lastly the research might shed light onto how food aid, humanitarian aid, and drought policies can be enacted or mended to minimalize the disparate effects of a drought on smaller communities and lessen rural-urban, age and gender disparities.

## Chapter 4

### Kinship & Family

In an African context, kinship systems dictate how resources are allocated and are associated with notions of rights, duties, responsibilities, and expectations. Kinship ideologies also play an instrumental role in defining the socialization process. Although the central importance of kinship is ubiquitous, there is great variability observed across different cultures. Guest (2016) defines kinship as the system of meaning and power that societies create to determine who is related to whom and he further adds, “Kinship networks ... ensure reproduction of the next generation, protect group assets, and influence social, economic, and political systems” (p. 236). Kinship connections thus have significant social and material implications. Additionally, kinship practices can even be a means to navigate poverty, in which certain strategies may be employed in order to survive based on roles and responsibilities assigned to extended kinship relations (Carsten, 2000; Stack 2003). Kinship networks, in other words, are not static, but rather dynamic and fluid.

Americans often define family in terms of a nuclear arrangement, incorporating a mother, a father, and children. In an African context, power is more diffuse across extended family members, including aunts, uncles, grandparents, and cousins, and as a result these family members play a greater role in the socialization of a child. African kinship relations can include other people in the village, clan, or community, such as fictive kin like a teacher or spiritual leader. A shift has occurred over the years in which kinship is currently not considered to be restricted strictly to biological reproduction (Carsten, 2000).

Through a focus on kinship, I explore the complex close relationships forged between people across gender, age, and ethnicity. Further, I demonstrate how drought rearranges kinship-based power structures, particularly in poverty-stricken, disenfranchised, resource deficient, rural communities, where drought seemingly exacerbates their already difficult economic situation. As a result, I investigate whether children are adopting new strategies in order to navigate economic hardship.

Typically, provisions of entitlements and economic security are dependent upon birthrights, age-specific rights, sex-specific rights and marital status. In addition to the immediate kin, Bryceson (1997) argues the community as a collective dictates what is normal, acceptable and expected in terms of behavior, morals, values, traditions, customs, and responsibilities. People who deviate from what has been established as the norm risk being rejected by their respective kin and community (Bryceson, 1997).

Kinship prescribes specific roles and expectations in terms of caretaking for parents and the elderly. Usually, this responsibility falls on the youth and young adults. This was especially clear in Lisa Cliggett's (2005) ethnographic account, *Grains from Grass: Aging, Gender, and Famine in Rural Africa*. This text analyzes the complexity in aging, gender and kinship ties in Zambia in situations of scarcity or famine. Cliggett examines how distance and time puts stress on social relationships and how social behavior, in times of discord, expose the limitations of kinship ties (Cliggett, 2005). The Gwembe people of Zambia are reliant on social networks, but when they experience extreme persistent droughts, some members are prompted to migrate as a means to survive.

In Tanzania as well, when a severe drought affects a region, many children as



young as seven or eight migrate to a larger city such as Arusha or Dar es Salaam in hopes of finding income. Many never return home and thus grow up outside of their respective kin (descent) group (Srikanthan, 2012). As a result, their kinship groups become seemingly indiscernible to them. For example, children who have left their families' villages at young ages and return a decade later may not be familiar with the customs and responsibilities to which they are supposed to adhere. They may be denied their rights to land, among other familial entitlements and privileges, if they decide to return, as they appear unrecognizable to their respective kinship group (Cooper, 2017).

In Zambia if an individual migrates to the city for economic and employment purposes, he or she is expected to maintain ties with the family by means of gift-giving or remittance. They may also be encouraged to participate in various family and community activities such as initiation rights, and ceremonies of birth, death, and marriage. John S. Mbiti (1975) claims that there is a customary way in which an African should approach the choice of a marriage partner, engagements, weddings, husband-and-wife relationships, the setting up of a family, relationships between the couple and other relatives, and inheritance. Failure to follow these customs, engage in gift-giving or remittance, or participate in family activities and traditions may result in the severing of kinship ties.

Cliggett describes scenarios in which the practice of migration during drought and famine years tests the bonds of kinship and cultural norms of support: "For Gwembe migrants, giving small gifts (or "gift remitting") to aging relatives and other village-based kin establishes a form of mutual recognition that builds and sustains their social connections" (Cliggett 2005, p.146; Cliggett 2003). Many studies have shown that these

gift-giving patterns do not typically entail substantial economic support, which is often disappointing to parents and elders (Moore & Vaughn, 1987; Hansen, 1997; Crehan 1997; Ferguson, 2012). Despite this expectation, Cliggett, Hansen (1997) and Ferguson (2012) assert that if a migrant wants to maintain their good-standing with their family and community back home, it is imperative that they maintain this connection to their rural origins. The majority of Gwembe migrants, according to Cliggett, have intentions of returning home and participating in gift-remittance when they first leave. But upon arriving in the city and struggling to acclimate themselves with the city life, many young people spend most of their time and energy on supporting themselves.

After living in the cities for an extended period of time, many migrants' views about returning to the village change. Cliggett documents how this shift has its consequences:

Rather than offerings of support and daily life, gift remittances represent a gesture of recognition that will keep pathways for return to the village open and allow a returned migrant to take up residence and farming alongside his kin. Without maintaining even this symbolic relationship with the village, a migrant risks losing his option to return should life in town become undesirable.

For the rural elderly then, most migrant children are not a reliable source of support. In my discussions with the elderly about young Sinafala migrants, most people expressed ambivalence about young people leaving. "They go to feed and clothe themselves" was a common explanation for a young man's departure...

During periods of economic hardship, however children struggle to support themselves whether living in the village or in migrant destinations; supporting an aging mother can become an extreme burden. Young people living out of immediate contact with their relatives are more able to manage their resources independently; they can choose when and how they will give assistance to aging parents, despite the normative pressures that encourage children to support their elders (Cliggett, 2005, p. 145-157).

As Cliggett's findings demonstrate, a parent's decision to send a child away in response to immediate challenges of survival can threaten a child's or future generation's identifications with natal home and kin (Cooper, 2017). It is in these instances in which kinship ties are tested the most that the limitations of kinship are revealed. Cliggett's analysis of migration, coupled with gift remittance, is gendered. In other words, this practice is one way boys and men, in particular, manage to negotiate kinship roles that influence people in different ways. Contrarily, women's physical mobility often decreases during periods of drought (Gray & Mueller, 2012). In Tanzania, many aspects of life such as mobility, access to resources, employment, labor and assets, are deeply entrenched and influenced by kinship power relations and gender ideologies. Forced migration due to drought hinders one's ability to act in accordance with these ideologies. Although the city life has its economic advantages, harm is done socially when an individual migrates.

Marriage, or affinal relationships, in particular, are different than relationships of descent, in part because of the African tradition of bridewealth. In East Africa as well as other regions of Africa, bridewealth is characterized by the exchange of goods, livestock or currency from the groom and his kin to the kin of the bride. This is said to compensate the bride's kin for the loss of the bride. It also is associated with establishing rights and responsibilities of the bride and groom. If a marriage fails, some or all of the bridewealth must be returned to the groom and his kin. These are ideological aspects embedded in kinship systems that are not always fulfilled in reality.

Historically, bridewealth was associated with respect or appreciation, but changing social institutions and practices in Tanzania have nearly morphed it into an

economic exchange exclusively. For example, the Wasukuma ethnic group, of the southeastern African Great Lakes region of Tanzania, exchange 20-50 heads of cattle for bridewealth. For the Wagogo, of Dodoma, an extremely drought prone region in central Tanzania, the exchange stands at 20-30 heads of cattle (Omari, 1991). In times of drought, families are forced to make tough decisions such as forcing their daughters into premature marriages in exchange for economic security, food security, livestock and water (*Save The Children*, 2006). Consequently, droughts add a greater economic urgency to the transaction, which may have an effect of lessening its appreciative symbolic social role.

Kinship and livestock are linked in terms of responsibilities, ownership, and rights. In pastoral and even agricultural communities, cattle are synonymous to currency. They are essentially a unit of wealth. The Wagogo value cattle more than inheritable land (Forster, 1997). There are many responsibilities associated with livestock involving both women and men, but women rarely possess their own cattle. This is a consequence of this kinship power structure. This is important because during a drought, men often attempt to sell their cattle, migrate to cities and never return. The result is female-headed households without any cattle for capital. This often leads to their increased workloads. Additionally it is difficult for a woman to transition as the sole operator of a farm because obtaining business loans to buy seeds and other farm necessities is a practice generally exclusive to men (Upperman, 1999).

In Tanzanian agricultural communities, women perform the majority of the tasks required to maintain the farm (Boserup, 1989). Due to the patriarchal and patrilineal ideological power of many relationships in Tanzania, boys and men traditionally reap the

benefits of inheritance, economics, resources and decision-making power (Bryceson, 1997). For that reason dependency on men is often the determining factor of a woman's place in rural Tanzanian communities and many women feel it necessary to remain dependent on men for financial and social status indefinitely. This is not restricted to marriage, but also includes a woman's dependency on her father, brother, uncle or male friend. Nevertheless, marriage is the major institution used by men to exercise their power and it is binding, impeding women's progress by restricting physical and social mobility.

This notion that marriage is the most important feat for a woman to accomplish is a view held by both men and women, normalizing this unequal power arrangement:

Even if its true that bridewealth imprisons us women, it is the only way to get respect. (quoted by Mbilinyi, 1991, p. 130) (Bryceson, 1997, p. 63)

In reference to this quote, although it is apparent that marriage reproduces uneven power relations, it is also an institution through which women access power. In Africa if a woman remains single and childless for an extensive amount of time she risks being stigmatized, labeled as sick, or considered to be a disgrace. Women are often able to secure economic and social support through marriage. Many Africans speak of marriage in terms of satisfying a religious obligation and consider the institution as a means to increase social mobility as a family (Rhine, 2016). Creighton and Omari (1997) discuss marriage as not only a contract but also a rite of passage that gives women access to rights, privileges, entitlements to land, labor, and resources.

In an African context men are supposed to feel obligated to provide for their wives and families, while women are expected to display obedience to their husbands under all circumstances (Rhine, 2016). The unequal power arrangements observed

through the institution of marriage are normalized by the majority of Africans as appropriate behavior for different genders. Rhine (2016) highlights that these power arrangements are reinforced through social, religious, and even legal discourses. She describes a situation in Nigeria in which men actually are unable to provide for their families which I think is applicable to the struggles families face during periods of drought in Tanzania. She highlights how women navigate survival and engage in additional economic activities to help provide for their families:

Consequently, women make key contributions to household economies despite the fact that their labor is often hidden from view. By doing so, they garner authority in their relationships, while also protecting their husband's reputations. With limited or inconsistent opportunities for sustainable incomes, however women must often leverage their power to secure resources from others. (Rhine, 2016, p. 8)

This excerpt demonstrates how women are able to obtain and manage power within a marriage during difficult economic periods. This is also associated with why women's workloads increase during periods of drought in Tanzania (Arku & Arku, 2010; Koda, 1997).

This chapter highlights how kinship dictates what is normal, acceptable and expected in terms of behavior, morals, values, traditions, customs and responsibilities, in a Tanzanian context. I have also described how bridewealth is deeply intertwined with kinship and how the link between livestock and kinship dictates the gendered division of labor, ownership and rights involving cattle. I discussed the risks associated with living in opposition to one's respective kin as a result of migration. Lastly I visited the issue of marriage and demonstrated how the majority of hardship, abuse, violence and sexism women experience transpire at the household, family and marital levels not only during times of strife such as drought but in everyday life (Bryceson, 1997). For example, young

girls are often pressured into premature marriages, men claim ownership rights over reproduction, and women don't receive credit for their hard work and contributions to their families. The duality of marriage, in this context, is that it hinders women from accessing power in various facets of life but simultaneously grants women power in other ways.

## **Chapter 5**

### **Childhood, Socialization, & Expectations**

Despite the cultural diversity on the African continent, children are highly valued for various reasons (Koech, 1999). They are viewed as an investment and the entire village or community is involved in their upbringing. Lydia Nganga (2012) expounds on the importance of children in Kenya:

In every ethnic group, children have special importance because they ensure the continuity of the group in general and the family in specific. Children have special value because through marriage, they build social, economic, and political alliances between different clans and ethnic groups. Family and clan lineage are important critical ideals that continue for a lifetime. Taken seriously also is the reciprocal nature of various family roles. For example, while parents are responsible for raising children, children have a responsibility to take care of aging parents and grandparents... All Kenyan children are socialized to the importance of “African socialism”—that is, the value of hospitality to both kin and strangers, respect for community elders, establishing strong family systems, respecting marriage customs, and the meaning of different initiation rituals, including death and burial customs (Nganga, 2012, p. 110).

This excerpt is important as it describes ideal circumstances, but in periods of drought or economic hardship this idea of valuing and investing in a child can be threatened. The reciprocal nature of adults taking care of children and children taking care of the elderly has been reshaped, as individuals try to navigate and negotiate relationships in order to survive.

In reference to parenting in Tanzania, it is necessary that a child be raised in a particular way. It is the duty of the family to socialize the child (Omari, 1991). The socialization of African children proceeds in developmental stages with the help of many different agents. Also, guidance by example is heavily emphasized. In infancy, family and community members verbalize to the baby certain expectations and what qualities he



or she will have as an adult. As a child matures he or she is given lessons on protection, food production, environment, culture, sharing, social responsibilities, mutual dependence, belonging, mutual respect, and respect for elders (Nganga, 2012). It is widely accepted for children to learn from age mates, older children, other community members and elders. Additionally, primary and secondary schooling are essential in the socialization of African children, especially as they pertain to the concepts of independence and interdependence, or how to put the needs of the community first.

Droughts impact the socialization process of a child in multiple ways. First, if the child migrates to the streets of an urban city, they are forced to figure out norms and values on their own or from other veteran street children. Second, if a child is forced to drop out of school during the time of a drought, then he or she will not benefit from certain elements of socialization that come along with that education. This means that he or she may not learn the importance of independence and interdependence that are deeply entrenched in educational thought in African contexts. Street children in particular are more exposed to the capitalistic and individualistic lifestyles in big cities, which emphasize independence over interdependence, but traditionally interdependence is valued more. It is in essence the “we vs. I” approach to life or collectivism and collaboration versus individualism. This ideology, Tanzanians suggest, promotes community and the sense of belonging. If a child returns from the city to his or her respective rural community displaying qualities in opposition to interdependence, he or she will be received negatively:

Harambee cements the Kenyan structure of interdependence within the community, where each man knows he has certain responsibilities and duties and there are certain sanctions against those who do not fulfill expectations... As a young boy he herds cattle in a group with other

children of the clan...A boy's own father may be poor, but when he comes to marry a distant uncle with property does not hesitate to go ahead and contract a marriage. If the uncle refuses to part with cattle—for the brideprice—the boy is entitled to take them away without the support of the elders. If, on the hand, he had not as a youth made his full contribution to the community, he does not stand a chance with the elders when he comes to the age of marriage. When he is in need, his demands will often be disregarded and the elders are bound to tell him he deserves nothing better until he proves himself. (Mboya, 1963b, p. 28) (Kisubi, 2012, p. 156)

Additionally in the ethnography *Grains From Grass*, young adults challenged this traditional notion of interdependence in Zambia. Cliggett was able to challenge the Western generalization of African families and describe a shifting social landscape in which the migrant youth are, in fact, not in favor of being caregivers for the elderly. For some of these children kinship ties were severed entirely, leaving them homeless, malnourished, poor and without education. An additional manner in which the socialization process can be neglected is if the stress of a drought forces the parents to take part in unconventional economic activities or multiple economic endeavors in hopes of earning supplemental income which does not allot enough time for the ideal socialization process to occur and the knowledge to be transmitted from parent to child. Many mothers report working up to sixteen hours a day to support their families during drought periods (Arku & Arku, 2010).

The lack of democratization of social relations at the household level, as articulated by Bertha Koda (1999), coupled with the subordinate social position that children have in the generational hierarchy, makes them especially vulnerable during times of drought. Children do not have very much autonomy or authority in a Tanzanian context, consequently they feel as if their only choice is to comply (Smørdal, 2012). The element of vulnerability comes into play as children feel helpless as if they are not in

control of their own situation or destiny:

“Adults can choose what they want to do, but children don’t have any choice.” (Faraji, 11 years old)

“It’s better to be adult because then you can do something. Child cannot do anything. A child is innocent, like how did I get this life, and she cannot do anything about it.” (Farida, 13 years old) (Smørdal, 2012, p. 86).

Under ideal circumstances this lack of power is not viewed in a negative manner because children are being cared for adequately. But power relationships are looked at with a more critical eye when communities are experiencing periods of drought and poverty, in which parents struggle to meet their children’s needs. This lapse in care accompanied with the low power position that children have causes them to feel out of control, leading to the severing of social ties, and children choosing to migrate.

Traditionally Tanzanian children have been socialized in a manner in which they possess very little power, and it is very gendered. The socialization of girls is often tailored towards the development of skills and tools for motherhood and feminine roles within the framework of patriarchal ideologies. It is in this part of the socialization process in which women learn to accept and respect male dominance and inequitable power arrangements. Conversely the socialization of boys is often geared towards preparing them to be heads of households and developing traits like aggressiveness and assertiveness. Generally, boys are apportioned more resources than girls but overall children are often marginalized when it comes to decision-making processes, especially those associated with the allocation of resources (Koda, 1999). Bertha Koda (1999) argues that this in part explains children’s sometimes ‘socially unacceptable’ strategies for negotiating and re-negotiating access to resources. (p. 237) This holds true in times of

drought when resources are often scarce and children are compelled to perform socially unacceptable tasks in order for their survival (Koda, 1997; Koda 1999). These undertakings could range from prostitution, to drug trafficking, to stealing. Engaging in such practices are dependent upon a child's gender. By performing these tasks children risk being ostracized by their kin and criminalized by society. However, children are not just tainted or immoral: they are solving problems the way they know how and are challenging these power configurations and ideologies.

Droughts compounded with the lack of democracy at the household level and the essentially subordinate social position that children have, make children especially vulnerable. They feel out of control and incapable of improving their current economic situation. For this reason many children employ different strategies and migrate to cities, sever kinship ties and take their chances at living on the streets. It is clear that kinship ideologies can make life worse in some ways for women and children. In the context of a drought, kinship and gender ideologies are directly affecting young people's ability to navigate survival and are exacerbating inequalities.

## Chapter 6

### The Gendered Experiences of Children as a Result of Droughts

Next, I outline the evidence that highlights how the challenges that children face in reference to droughts are gendered.<sup>2</sup> I do so by categorizing the children in terms of where they reside, rural or urban.

#### A. The Rural Child

The children that stay in the rural communities in times of drought face a specific set of challenges. As described above, in times of drought families tend to pressure or force their daughters into premature marriages in exchange for economic and food security, via means of bridewealth, prior to even reaching their teen years.

Simultaneously what is at stake here is the devaluation of education for young girls. Fathers in particular are unbothered by the consequences of not affording their daughters an education, as made evident by a news story highlighting the challenges a young impoverished girl is facing in a drought stricken rural Tanzanian region known as Geita.

The news story describes a pre-teen girl named Vumilla who hopes to attend college and become a nurse, but her father would like to cut her elementary education short for economic purposes. According to the story, he believes it is better to marry off his daughter, to rescue his family out of the jaws of poverty, than to spend the little he has on buying school uniforms, textbooks, pens and food to keep his child in school. He even makes the claim that, once his daughter is married, he will have one less person to feed and clothe. This story highlights the harsh realities of a father's struggle to feed his family and a girl's persistence and desire to resist a cycle of marrying young:

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<sup>2</sup> Although gender is a social construct, in all of the studies that will be referenced here, gender and biological sex will be used interchangeably.

I would love to lead a good life in the future. So, I am not ready to get married,” she said as she prays for a breakthrough that will see her live her dream...I don’t want to get married because I will suffer more.

I have seen my sister, who got married at a young age suffer a lot and it’s because she did not finish school to acquire a job to help her earn a living,” she laments and adds, “I don’t like the kind of life my sister is living now.” (Robi, 2017)

This news story from fall of 2017 portrays the current challenges that girls grapple with in Tanzania, which are exacerbated in times of drought.

Additionally, enrollment rates are at their highest for girls ages 5-14, although the enrollment rate decreases as age increases (*National Bureau of Statistics, 2017*).

For females enrollment seemingly drops off around the age of fifteen, presumably because of marriage, pregnancy or other household responsibilities (*National Bureau of Statistics, 2017*). As made evident by Vumilla’s story, premature marriages induced by drought are forcing girls to drop out of school earlier and earlier.

Oling-Sisay (2012) indicates that some of the positive outcomes of educating girls in Africa is the reduction of infant and child mortality rates, delaying of marriages until ready, societal improvement in all sectors, environmental sustainability, increased self confidence and political participation, and a decrease in female genital mutilation.

According to the Global Partnership for Education (n.d.), education promotes gender equality, reduces the instances of child marriages, and promotes peace, amongst other things. Yet, this lack of attention and commitment dedicated to improving and maintaining the enrollment of girls in academic institutions has societal consequences, as it reinforces the vicious cycle of uneducated, disenfranchised, status-less/powerless women.

Obtaining a decent education is not a challenge limited to girls in times of a drought. Displacement coupled with low-enrollment rates due to drought has facilitated school closings across East Africa. Although this isn't very common in Tanzania currently, it is very plausible as the occurrences of droughts are on the rise. A report from Save The Children (2018) highlights the dangers of not receiving an education for children, regardless of their gender. According to the report, it is expected that 12,000 children are at risk of dropping out of school each day across various East African countries:

In Kenya, according to the Ministry of Education, on average three out of ten children are enrolled in school in the drought prone areas of Wajir and Mandera. The situation is worse for girls whereby only two out of ten are enrolled and even fewer complete their education. Schools close due to lack of water and the few children enrolled, drop out to migrate with their families in search of water and pasture.

“If 12,000 children drop out of school every single day this year, this region will lose an entire generation of children who not only won't reach their potential, but will face grave dangers to their health and well-being. No child should miss out on their right to an education. It's especially crucial to keep schools open during a drought because schools offer a perfect opportunity to give children food, water and vaccines so they can learn, be safe and go on to achieve great things” (*Save The Children*, 2018)

When rural children are removed from school they are sometimes compelled to partake in illegal activities in which they risk being criminalized for such as, prostitution, drug trafficking, and stealing, as mentioned earlier. This element of survival is a double sword that improves children's economic situations immediately but makes them vulnerable simultaneously. Once criminalized, many children's rights are disregarded. Additionally this news article among others does not address the consequences or correlation between poor nutrition and hunger, and poor performance in the classroom.

More attention should be paid attention to this matter because droughts have the power to affect a child's cognitive skills and ability to learn. Education is key in safeguarding the futures of children and communities. (*Norwegian Refugee Council, 2017*) Education plays a major role in alleviating poverty and provides individuals with an opportunity for a better life regardless of gender. It ensures continuity of the society by producing productive citizens and decreasing socio-economic inequalities. Therefore, if unaddressed, a drought's effects on education will impact generations to come.

A study entitled, "The Problem with Boys: Bridewealth Accumulation, Sibling Gender, and the Propensity to Participate in Cattle Raiding among the Kuria of Tanzania" (2004), highlights the challenges and pressures that adolescent boys without any sisters face in helping their family attain money, as bridewealth is not an option. It paints a different picture for families that lack daughters, in which sons steal Tanzanian livestock and sell them to Tanzanian or Kenyan buyers (Fleisher & Holloway, 2004). When a severe drought is experienced in a region, livestock prices increase as the supply decreases. Circumstances such as these increase as young men feel pressured to partake in any economic endeavor to keep their families afloat financially. Cattle may be stolen for two reasons: (1) to acquire bridewealth for marriage or (2) for instant food or cash (i.e., cattle to be sold).

Fetching water is typically a task left to women and girls. During times of drought, water shortages arise, and Wamassai girls have been known to walk up to eleven hours a day in search of clean water, but the average distance is around four miles (*United Nations, 2014*). Research suggests on average a girl can spend over six hours a day lugging over 40 pounds of water (Hansen, 2018). When inadequate amounts of rain



fell in the Namakongoro village of Lindi, Tanzania, villagers were forced to search for water in alternative places, such as underground, in which women descended nearly 100 feet (30 meters) down a feebly built wooden ladder into a cave network with a very minimal supply of water (“Climate Change”, 2011).

The safety and physical health of women and girls has been put in jeopardy as they lug heavy loads of water for long distances often alone and in the dark to avoid extreme temperatures, subjecting them to sexual violence and in some cases the transmission of HIV. Additional serious threats to a girl’s health include chronic fatigue, heat exhaustion, spinal and pelvic deformities, anemia, reproductive and fertility issues (Hansen 2018; Iris, 2015). In instances in which extreme physical stress leads to reproductive and fertility issues, these girls will be perceived as undesirable and it will be unlikely that they will get the opportunity to marry or reap the benefits of being a wife and a mother, such as financial security, companionship and intimacy. Also, women and girls are the primary caretakers when household members fall ill. As mentioned earlier, droughts can lead to the pollution of surface water, resulting in the increased transmission of water-borne illnesses. With the increased workload of women during droughts, it is very likely that girls would be responsible for caring for their loved ones, such as younger siblings and elder family members (Hansen, 2018). Again, this is another reason why girls are known to drop out of school, as clean water is a necessity and studies show that access to it improves the enrollment of girls in school by 15% (Hansen, 2018). Additionally, employment opportunities are often miniscule in rural areas, resulting in the migration of many children to urban areas.

## **B. The Urban “Street” Child**

The rapid increase of a very vulnerable population of street children is often overlooked in Tanzania and other sub-Saharan African countries. A study conducted among 200 street children between the ages of eight and sixteen in Dar Es Salaam, a major city in Tanzania, over the span of eleven months in 1994 and 1995, found that they all had previously migrated from other regions (Lugalla & Mbwambo, 1999). The regions well represented were those that experienced a combination of high levels of poverty and unforgiving ecological conditions such as drought and infertile lands.

The experiences of girls and boys on the streets tend to be drastically different, beginning with how and why children migrate. In contrast to a boy, a girl’s migration to the street is not as spontaneous of a process, as cultural sanctions toward girls are stronger and thus they are subject to more controlled supervision or monitoring by their families (Lugalla & Mbwambo, 1999). Running away is culturally unacceptable and nearly impossible. Consequently, most girls leave home but seek accommodation with other families or work as domestic servants. Multiple researchers have indicated that it is difficult to find girls who are on the street twenty-four hours a day seven days a week. Once girls reach independence many work in the entertainment industry as prostitutes and are harassed by pimps and police. Evidence has shown that girls are harassed and detained more than boys and are generally more vulnerable to sexual violence (Lugalla & Mbwambo, 1999). As opposed to boys, virtually all of the street girls surveyed did not indicate attraction to the street life as a major factor in why they have chosen to adopt the street lifestyle rather trying to evade marriage:

Question: So did any of your siblings attain some level of formal education?

Alima: Yes, but only the boys and not the girls.

Question: So what would have happened if you stayed home idle?

Alima: I would be married off to a complete stranger in a heartbeat.

Question: Really? Is this routine or occasional?

Alima: Yes, the girls barely enjoy any formal education because the impression is that they will be married off anyway. My parents think there is no incentive in giving formal education to the girls as all they will do is find a man who is capable of providing financial support, even if the arrangement is against the girl's will. That ends up being a very tough situation because then, the man becomes very abusive for the simple reason that I have to depend on him for almost everything. (Amantana, 2012, p. 120)

A significant difference was found in sexual activity amongst boys and girls with 73% of girls and 49% boys indicating that they have engaged in sexual intercourse (Lugalla & Mbwambo, 1999). 61% of girls had never used a condom and often found it difficult to negotiate condom use to protect themselves from infections and diseases because their partners were offering money:

'I would really likely to protect myself against AIDS by using condoms... but when I tell my sexual partners to use condoms they refuse... and I can't stop having sex with them because they give me money to buy food and clothes.'  
(Girl, 18 years) (Amury & Komba, 2010, p. 22)

There is also a great gender disparity in terms of employment and begging. A particular study indicated that the majority of boys reported that they worked informally during the day as car-parking boys, vehicle security guards, car washers or baggage loaders. However, 34% of girls as opposed to 6% of boys were found to engage in begging which in turn increases street girls chances of being involved in sexual violence and has serious negative implications for girls sexual and overall health. What holds true for many girls is that street girls simply do not possess the qualifications to secure an alternative livelihood and therefore are more likely to be sexually exploited (Anarfi & Antwi, 1995). In a specific study, of all participants (boys and girls) surveyed, only a

small percentage of children indicated that they had received any formal or informal education. Of that small percentage, none were girls, a symptom of how challenging it is for rural girls to receive any form of education, which ultimately exacerbates their circumstances on the street as they lack certain skills and training. Street girls do not engage in sex for money alone but also for security and accommodation. Girls are pressured to sell sex to survive because their opportunities to earn a living are minute and as a result their health is adversely affected. In the same study it was found that 80% of the girls surveyed in contrast to 30% of the boys surveyed had experienced a sexually transmitted disease or infection. He highlights that in an era of rampant HIV/AIDS transmission, commercial sex as a survival strategy becomes a death strategy or a death ticket (Lugalla & Mbwambo, 1999).

In terms of health, living in such horrendous conditions as these at such a juvenile age has been linked to severe stress, emotional turmoil, and increased susceptibility and vulnerability to diseases and illnesses. One study by Cohen et al. (1991) using the Home, Education, Activities, Drug use and abuse, sexual behavior, suicidality and depression psycho-social profile data was able to successfully link street life with psycho-social distress. Psycho-social distress leads children of the streets to engage in risky behaviors as a means to cope with their daily problems and struggles. A prominent risky behavior that street children engage in is drug abuse in the form of glue sniffing, or smoking marijuana or cigarettes. Although these behaviors make the street life bearable, they also have serious impacts on the overall health and well-being of children long-term.

In Nairobi, Kenya anthropologists investigated the criminal acts often committed by street children and discovered that the most common offenses were picking pockets,

bag, watch and/or jewelry snatching, stealing money or food, drug possession and, drug trafficking. These anthropologists make the assertion that street children are not criminal by nature, nor are they embryonic criminals, aspiring to an adult life of full-time crime (Shorter & Onyancha, 1999). These children engage in these criminal activities solely for the sake of their own survival. The crimes they are guilty of are committed in order to supply their basic needs such as food, shelter, and health care services, which undeniably they should have a right to under all circumstances. However, the police consider street children as seasoned criminals and treat them accordingly. The police have been known to physically abuse street boys and extort money from them while they sexually proposition and coerce girls. Stereotyping or labeling street children as criminals allows for them to be justifiably discriminated against and denied rights and services, further perpetuating the cycle of despair for this adolescent vulnerable population.

The criminalization and stigmatization of street children has led to many street children being subjected to a significant amount of oppression. Chokora, a derogatory Swahili term used in Kenya, which by definition means a rubbish scavenger and labels street kids as an other, or an outsider (Shorter & Onyancha, 1999). The aforementioned anthropologists observed that more often than not community perceptions of street kids were deeply rooted in and associated with criminality. Observations reveal the apprehension or trepidation of the general public when in the presence of street children. The anthropologists argue, such animosity and bias constitute a permanent state of discrimination against street children. They are considered guilty before being charged for anything, and they do not have any chance to defend themselves (Shorter & Onyancha, 1999). Health care services and educational services are also rendered

unaffordable for street children, something that the government is well aware of and capable of amending. Their basic and human rights are disregarded and laws protecting children in general discriminate against street children specifically. They are deprived of their childhoods as the circumstances prohibit them from thriving as they get entangled in a cycle of misfortune and adversity. UNICEF (2006) claims that although street children are physically visible they are often ignored, shunned and excluded, and very difficult to protect and to provide services. UNICEF (2006) also views the term 'street children' as problematic as it can be employed as a stigmatizing label and characterizes the population as homogeneous. It assigns criminality to all street children. In actuality, street children are not criminal in nature and operate on the street in diverse ways, and each child is unique in their struggle to survive.

## Chapter 7

### Drought as an Inflictor of Violence

In the environmental studies scholarly literature, the long-term effects of drought are primarily discussed in the context of environmental degradation. This scholarship often neglects the long-term social effects on human lives and society. Weather events are frequently viewed as extraordinary phenomena causing casualties and destruction in the immediate aftermath of the event. But in actuality, most weather events cause harm that will affect generations to come. Droughts are entities that inflict “slow violence,” a concept articulated by Rob Nixon (2013):

By slow violence I mean a violence that occurs gradually and out of sight, a violence of delayed destruction that is dispersed across time and space, an attritional violence that is typically not viewed as violence at all. Violence is customarily conceived as an event or action that is immediate in time, explosive and spectacular in space, and as erupting into instant sensational visibility. We need, I believe, to engage a different kind of violence, a violence that is neither spectacular nor instantaneous, but rather incremental and accretive, its calamitous repercussions playing out across a range of temporal scales. In so doing, we also need to engage the representational, narrative and strategic challenges posed by the relative invisibility of slow violence. (Nixon, 2013, p. 2)

What makes drought especially dangerous is that it is a slowly unfolding or gradually developing environmental disaster, sometimes so gradual that many of the negative impacts of a drought go unreported and unnoticed until they reach a certain level of severity (Stanke, Kerac, Prudhomme, Medlock, & Murray, 2013). And severity is typically defined in terms of phases, phase five or famine being the highest. Droughts are typically responded to only after phase four has been reached, which could be years after it began. As the National Centers for Environmental information puts it, “Drought does not always offer the same immediate and dramatic visuals associated with events such as

hurricanes and tornadoes...” (*National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration [NOAA]*, n.d., para. 2). Since it is not considered to be a natural disaster, it is often not met with the same humanitarian and governmental aid and response that other climatic events receive. Another limitation of droughts is that because they are slow to develop, they are difficult to measure. This complicates how researchers are able to assess the impacts of droughts as most effects typically accumulate overtime, are indirect, and are linked with other circumstances such as poverty.

Despite these difficulties and the limited attention paid to droughts, droughts exacerbate inequities, and human actions resulting from droughts are harmful as well. Inequality and poverty are reproduced by drought and can inhibit individuals from aligning with the aforementioned kinship and gender ideologies. As evident by the many aforementioned examples, in many cases drought has the capacity to cause social harm over time with the loss of family members due to migration and kinship breakdown, lack of education for women and, increased premature marriages and population of street children. These circumstances, which slowly unfold over time, are often indirect and invisible or can be attributed to poverty exclusively, when in fact drought is to blame for exacerbating many of these conditions. For example typically we don't think about droughts as the cause of household tensions that lead to marital or domestic violence disputes resulting from financial strain and food insecurity, or to children being denied rights on the streets of Tanzanian cities, or to eight-year-old girls being forced into marriages, or to migrant children being rejected and not allowed their rights to land, among other familial entitlements upon returning home, or to girls being subjected to sexual violence on the streets in urban areas or on long walks to obtain water in rural



villages. People don't think about these types of occurrences being associated with drought because the effects of drought are slow, invisible and dispersed across time and space. Yet these effects all stem from a single event. UNICEF (2015) describes some of the potential direct impacts: death, infectious diseases, stunting, separation of the family, and decreased school attendance. While some of the potential indirect impacts are displacement, political and institutional breakdown, conflict, breakdown in social systems, and no access to markets.

UNICEF (2015) also highlights how the cumulative effects of droughts exacerbate inequities. In these cases droughts are inflicting slow violence on individuals who are already being afflicted by structural violence. For example children from wealthier families are more likely to be able to afford to migrate, have continuous access to health care, afford food and employ coping mechanisms that do not compromise schooling, as opposed to poorer families. (UNICEF, 2015, p. 36) This is a result of structural violence and these cumulative effects exacerbate inequities, and lead to long-term deprivations for children from poorer families. Structural violence, a concept articulated by Johan Galtung (as cited in Nixon, 2013), involves rethinking different notions of causation in terms of violence. Essentially, the concept asserts that instead of a single person or population inflicting violence on others, there is a social structure or institution that is harming individuals by preventing them from meeting their needs. An example of how a well-intended response to drought inflicts structural violence, involves humanitarianism in the form of food aid.

In a documentary called, *The Price of Aid*, the director Jihan el-Tahri (2004) describes a recent drought crisis at the famine phase in Zambia. The film discusses how

food aid programs compound the problem by perpetuating circumstances in which people became reliant upon food aid. Essentially, food aid programs offer immediate assistance and relieve hunger for the time being. However, Zambian farmers and representatives offered thought-provoking insight that suggests that victims of famine became dependent upon these programs and in addition local development projects and local agriculture were undermined in the process. Moyo & Ferguson (2010) agree with this premise that aid creates a cycle of dependency, corruption, market distortion, and poverty. As a result, instead of developing countries becoming self-reliant, they are entangled in a bureaucratic network of food aid assistance agencies and programs that ultimately do more harm than good to their economies, environment and health of their inhabitants. This debunks the myth that aid from Western countries has been instrumental in alleviating poverty and increasing growth in third world countries.

In Zambia, farmers became inundated with specific foods and were in dire need to make money. Because these same particular foods had been dispersed throughout these famine-stricken regions it made it impossible for the farmers to create a market. Additionally, only certain kinds of crops were exported, disregarding what farmers wanted to sell. These included GMOs amongst other crops, which are not typically apart of a traditional African diet and can adversely affect the health of a population. Corruption also plays a role here as sometimes African government officials will sell the food aid to middle men who will then attempt to sell it to individuals in areas affected by drought, only worsening the conditions even more.

In this chapter I apply the concept of slow violence to drought and demonstrate how droughts are difficult to assess. I highlight how the invisibility of the event makes it

difficult to respond to and how the effects often go unaddressed. I explore how drought causes social harm and how responses to drought sometimes cause structural violence. I have attempted to show how the slow term effects of drought result in violence and cause problems that exacerbate kinship and gender relations.

## Chapter 8

### Concluding Remarks

In chapters one and two I established the problem and provided background information on Tanzania and the nature, characteristics and effects of droughts. I have explained how food deficits are on the rise at household levels specifically because there is an over-reliance on rain-dependent agriculture. I contend that the vulnerability of adolescent youth is often overlooked because they have stronger immune systems that are not as susceptible to disease and illness in comparison to young children and the elderly, and are physically capable of working. I have investigated how droughts impact adolescents in Tanzania and argue that they face a set of unique challenges influenced by kinship power structures that devastatingly disrupt their childhood and socialization.

The significance of my research and the methods that I employed are the centerpiece of chapter three. I explained how I employed a literature review and contextual analysis in order to understand Tanzanian kinship systems, gender roles, and expectations as they pertain to drought. I believe this thesis complicates how droughts are perceived and what they mean to different people. More importantly, it provides insight into which populations are at risk the most by highlighting some of the social effects of droughts. I think I have also demonstrated how drought is unique by applying the concept of slow violence and believe this will, in turn, reshape how people conceptualize drought and violence.

In chapter four I discuss how migration challenges kinship relations often leading to the severing of kinship ties, and how strategies employed in response to drought can threaten a child's or future generation's identifications with natal home and kin. I also

discuss how although marriage can be restrictive in nature, it presents itself as desirable, as women are able to receive respect, economic security and in some cases power.

In chapter five I discussed the socialization process of African children, which is highly influenced by kin and schooling. Children are valued highly and looked at as an investment. They are socialized to value hospitality to both kin and strangers, respect community elders, establish strong family systems, practice interdependence, respect marriage customs, and follow different rituals. Drought is a serious barrier to accessing education for children, and children are dependent upon schooling for a significant amount of their socialization experiences. Consequently, droughts negatively affect the socialization of children by causing school closures, decreasing enrollment and forcing displacement. Additionally I highlight how droughts compounded with the lack of democracy at the household level and the essentially subordinate social position that children have, make youth (as opposed to the elderly and young children under five) especially vulnerable, as they feel out of control and incapable of improving their current economic situation. Children often act out or engage in certain activities as a means to survive but in the process risk being ostracized by their kin and criminalized by society, which makes them vulnerable in a more subtle way than their counterparts.

In chapter six I discussed the experiences of children as a result of the increased occurrences of droughts and highlight gender differences. I differentiate between the child that remains in rural areas and the child that migrates to urban areas, and contend that under both sets of circumstances children do not fare well. In rural areas during drought periods, especially, we see that education for children is devalued, particularly for girls. Parents tend to force their daughters into premature marriages and their sons

into child labor. I discuss how boys are pressured into stealing cattle and how girls have to travel long distances to supply their family with water, jeopardizing their health. Migration is a strategy employed by many children in response to the economic hardship caused by droughts and tends to have many negative impacts on a child's health and well-being. It leads to increased incidences of sexual abuse of girls and boys, and increased cases of HIV/AIDS, prostitution, drug abuse and psychosocial stress. I also discuss how street children are criminalized and how that worsens their already vulnerable state.

To debunk the stigma associated with being a child of the streets or a rural child engaging in illegal activities, it is also important to understand the criminalization of these children. Understanding that virtually all children who migrate to the streets or engage in illegal activities in rural areas do so as a result of unfavorable circumstances, such as economic hardship caused by droughts, and as a survival strategy is very important to consider before stigmatizing these vulnerable individuals. These children live alone on the streets, without proper or reliable shelter; they have lost contact with their parents and, as such, do not enjoy parental protection, love and care. They are creating new fictive kinship ties and employing certain tactics in favor of survival as opposed to tradition. Their traditional socialization process has been disrupted. Instead of being socialized by their parents, they are being socialized by each other. Rural children on the other hand risk being ostracized for engaging in illegal activities, and girls specifically are often caught in a vicious cycle of disenfranchisement, low status and low power due to being denied an education and forced into marriage.

The rapid increase of street children is a troubling anomaly plaguing Tanzania and other sub-Saharan African countries. Many policy makers, politicians, urban planners, health care workers and law-enforcers possess preconceived notions that street kids are simply hooligans and criminals, undeserving of human rights and a share of the society's resources or provisions of health care. This deliberate lack of aid or intervention can also be considered slow-violence that perpetuates a slowly-unfolding cycle of poverty, malnutrition, poor education and overall poor health.

These children require special consideration since they are neglected by laws or excluded from services. Reversing the misconceived notions fueled by criminality held by those individuals who are supposed to better the health and well being of society but are paradoxically exacerbating the problem and perpetuating the cycle of misfortune, lies in understanding morality versus strategy. Survival tactics employed by children of the streets offer an interesting case for analysis because, in contrast to the notions of survival held by those that are not immersed in street culture, they challenge everyday ethics and how we conceptualize survival. Poverty and adverse situations such as those suffered by children affected by drought limit options and choices. Chernoff (2003) investigates how during periods of economic strife, the manner in which individuals operate is not a question of morals but a question of strategy and survival. When street children are faced with what may be considered insurmountable odds such as extreme poverty, they are forced to make choices albeit, criminal or not, on a basis of strategy in order of survival. These children are stigmatized, ostracized and criminalized due to the choices they are forced to make instead of being valorized for their determination to survive, in spite of

their dire circumstances. Stigma renders these children invisible and makes them vulnerable to various forms of violence (*Save The Children*, 2006).

Moral spaces of everyday life differ in how they influence the people within them. There are two different moral spaces at play here, the urban “streets,” and the “village” that is deeply entrenched and influenced by kinship power relations. The “streets” offer children a possible means for food, security, housing, and clothing and to escape abusive familial relationships. It is a moral space that offers and arguably requires a different set of rules in contrast to the “village” and it entails short-term tactics rather than long-term strategies and a moral compass to navigate. These children have already been robbed of a childhood but are fighting to still lead a good life, characterized not just by surviving but hopes of thriving and flourishing. The choices children make are driven by their hopes of thriving and flourishing and are strategically motivated rather than morally motivated because they are undervalued and neglected by those who they need assistance from the most and those who possess all the power to impact change. Ultimately, this is not a problem of children’s ethical decisions but a problem of policy makers, politicians, urban planners, health care workers and law-enforcers ethical decisions.

Evidently, ‘children of the drought’ do not fare well on the streets or in rural environments but their resilience and the strategies they employ to survive are necessary. However, the strategies that children employ in response to climate change in rural areas and urban environments have the potential to sever kinship ties, criminalize them, adversely affect their education, negatively impact their health and ultimately lead to a diminished quality of life of low socio-economic status, power, agency and autonomy.

In chapter seven I explored Nixon’s concept of slow violence and applied it to



drought to demonstrate how the slowly developing nature of the event makes it difficult to respond to. I investigate the ways in which drought causes social harm and exacerbate or reproduce inequities stemming from structural violence. I have attempted to show that although certain factors such as child labor, low school enrollment, and sexual abuse were all prevalent before droughts ravaged East Africa, they have all been exacerbated because of drought and cannot always be exclusively attributed to poverty (Srikanthan, 2012). As droughts increase the severity of these children's circumstances, what will result is a generation of under-educated homeless young adults, with poor physical and mental health, low socio-economic status, lacking specific trades or skills that could help them advance up the social ladder—all consequences of slow violence. Unaddressed, droughts alter social landscapes, test kinship ties and inflict violence by perpetuating a cycle of poverty, malnutrition, poor education and overall poor health that could be viewed as a serious and surging social and public health issue, as these children mature into adults, who unable to escape or cope with their circumstances, in turn may birth the next generation into the same cycle of disadvantage and disenfranchisement lacking the necessary tools to manage future droughts.

Although the Tanzanian government and other ministries have made strides to address the effects of drought, there is no official drought policy or system to monitor and detect the early warning signs and effects of drought. (Osima, 2014) I think being able to implement an early warning system or drought risk information system that has the capability to provide the government with important information like the potential impact of a drought is imperative. I think it would be even more beneficial if the system could take into account different population groups by age, gender, class, etc., in order to assess

the vulnerability of each group and determine where to direct the resources. Additionally, by law men and women are said to be equal in Tanzania but that is not heavily enforced. If more attention is paid to enforcing this law then the number of effects that women experience during drought periods may decrease.

Further a system needs to be in place in which leaders have the necessary tools or insight to make decisions to put the country in a better position to manage the effects of drought. Generally an entire country doesn't experience a drought all at once, so if the government could figure out ways to capitalize off of those regions that have water and food to lessen the effect of droughts that would be significant. Efforts to manage the problem internally would also lessen the likelihood of becoming dependent on outside aid that may induce corruption and cause more harm than good.

The business of aid and how it works is beyond the scope of this paper. Moyo (2010) has shown that throwing food or money at poor countries is not effective. I think what would be more beneficial is a systematic approach to food aid, in which both the giving side and receiving side trace the aid all the way to the people who are intended to receive it and incorporate some type of feedback system to monitor its effectiveness. I do agree with Moyo (2010) that the best way for an African country to handle its problem is internally to oppose the cycle of dependency.

Ideally Tanzanians would fair better during droughts if infrastructure was enhanced but that is easier said than done. Improved water systems, roads and health care facilities, would allow for the better distribution of resources like water and food, and quicker responses to drought. Also humans need to understand that their actions such as irrigation practices and deforestation may induce a drought, and need to be taught

alternative, less environment-harming practices if possible. When droughts are held to the same seriousness as natural disasters, then we can resist the cycle of poverty, malnutrition, poor education and overall poor health that is induced by the slow violence inflicted by this single weather event.

## Chapter 9

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