

Hunter-gatherers in transition: ecological, social, and reproductive trends among Hadzabe of Tanzania

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The Hadzabe foragers of Tanzania are currently experiencing large-scale shifts in their ecological, nutritional, and socio-political landscapes. Climate change, increased interaction with aid organizations, heightened participation in ethnotourism, and the expansion of wildlife conservation areas have led to conspicuous alterations in their identity, patterns of subsistence, degree of market integration, and access to biomedical care. Despite a long standing (and ever growing) interest in conducting research among this community, very few data are available on how such changes are impacting subsistence, mobility, health, and reproduction. Here, I explore the historical context and present day interactions between the Hadza and neighboring tribes in regard to resource acquisition (both wild and domesticated), land rights, and changing government policies regarding antenatal and postnatal care. I will review my recent work on food and water insecurity and shifting patterns in juvenile foraging, maternal behaviors, and age at marriage. These data not only act to dispel the myth that foragers remain immune to the products and processes of modernization, but also contextualize contemporary variation in subsistence regimes and highlight the resiliency that foragers exhibit in the face of change.