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The Kukyekukyeku Bamboo Orchestra of Mosomagor, Ghana

Benjamin Klaus ~
Anthropology

Abstract

After researching in Ghana, Ben has decided to continue his education and research in West Africa while obtaining a Ph.D. in Anthropology. Ben's research allowed him to combine his love for Ethnomusicology with his interest in social change in West Africa. He gained valuable personal as well as academic experiences: "The friendships I formed with people after listening to their personal stories...are things that I am going to cherish for the rest of my life." Having overcome his fears of traveling and approaching professors, Ben encourages other undergraduates not to be intimidated by research: "It is the most rewarding academic experience that I will carry away with me from UCI."

Key Terms:

- Ecological Conservation
- Effects of Tourism
- Ethnography
- Kinship Relations
- Participant Observation
- Socioeconomic Effects
- Traditional Music

This project explores the importance of the Kukyekukyeku Bamboo Orchestra to the socioeconomic life of the Mosomagor community in Ghana, West Africa. The following socioeconomic changes have occurred in light of the establishment of Kakum National Park: 1) a decrease in income, 2) the exodus of young men, 3) a break in kinship relations, and 4) the revival of their traditional bamboo music. As the Orchestra was founded for the main purpose of reaping the financial benefits of tourism, a discussion of tourism's obvious and potential effects (i.e., materialism, commercialism, and urbanization) concludes the paper. The data was gathered during a twenty-day period of observing, interviewing, and participating in the daily lives of the villagers of Mosomagor. The villagers confirmed the changes taking place in the village due to the establishment of Kakum National Park along with the subsequent regulations on hunting and gathering within the boundaries of the Park.

Faculty Mentor



Through his research in Ghana, Ben Klaus was able to discover and document a tradition that had died away to such a degree that even the Ghanaian experts in Legon at the Institute of African Studies were surprised. Ghana is composed of a rich and varied set of cultures, which continue to interact with one another in such a manner that change and development is continuous. Ben managed to track down this rare group of performers, who play on a set of tuned bamboo stamping tubes, and document and record their performance. The stamping-tube tradition must have been at one time widespread in West Africa because we know that from it came a number of traditions of stamping tubes in the Americas. Ben's study shows us much about the process of change even in a seemingly very traditional society.

~ Robert Garfias
School of Social Sciences

Introduction

My introduction to the village of Mosomagor was during a discussion with Dr. John Collins at the University of Ghana in Legon in early February 1998. He proposed a study concerning the music of the village. Mosomagor is comprised of Fante people working on the revival of their “traditional” bamboo music as a means of income to cope with the recent socioeconomic problems they are facing as a result of the Kakum National Park Project. As defined by the people of Mosomagor and those involved with the AGORO/CILTAD project, the bamboo music of Mosomagor is traditional. AGORO/CILTAD is the product of a collaboration of both Ghanaian and Danish interests in the preservation of traditional Ghanaian music and dance, and is backing the effort of the people of Mosomagor to revive their traditional music. This traditional music is not a pure genre deriving from time immemorial, but rather a vital, dynamic, aesthetic, and social practice that is continually in the process of transformation and creative invention.

My first encounter with Mosomagor was in April 1998 after visiting the AGORO/CILTAD project in Cape Coast. After visiting Mosomagor and experiencing the music and village life for only a few hours, I decided to conduct an ethnographic field study there.

This research is focused on the creation of the Kuyekukyeku Bamboo Orchestra and addresses the following questions: Has the Orchestra actually reaped the monetary benefits expected from tourism, and what are the effects of the Orchestra on the village? In addition, what are the effects of tourism on the village of Mosomagor and on the Orchestra? This paper begins with the history of the village before and after the creation of Kakum National Park and follows the history of bamboo music and the Orchestra, with specifics on the instruments, rhythms, song repertoire, and how to become a member of the Orchestra. Finally, the positive and negative effects of tourism on the village and on the Orchestra are explained.

Methodology

This ethnography is based on my experiences during twenty days living among the people of Mosomagor. Data was collected through formal and informal interviews and participant and non-participant observations. A translator for the Fante language was hired in order to facilitate the interviews. The formal interviews had three purposes. First, they were used to obtain the history of the village from three elders, Yao Abro, Kwesi Amoah, and Asona Abusuapene Kwame Amoah. In interviewing more than one elder, data reliability was increased. Second, interviews allowed the collection of information on the involvement of AGORO in the village, Conservation International, and the Kakum National Park Project. Finally, formal

interviews provided information on the Kuyekukyeku Bamboo Orchestra from its leader and founder, Bizmark Amoah, focusing on the history and repertoire of the bamboo music in Mosomagor.

Through informal interviews, the Mosomagor villagers were asked their views of the Bamboo Orchestra and their experiences with the new socioeconomic changes since the establishment of Kakum National Park. I also met with the Orchestra members to discuss how the Orchestra affected their daily lives.

In order to obtain information, I first had to earn the respect of the villagers. I immersed myself in the daily lives of the villagers, a technique called participant observation. I played bamboo instruments with the Orchestra members, learned Fante songs, accompanied families on daily trips to their farms to weed, and made meals. When not directly participating, I passively observed. For example, I watched rehearsals and a formal performance for the Ambassador of Denmark as well as the making of roofing thatches.

Data documentation took many forms. Interview data was documented with systematic fieldnotes. The music and songs that comprised the repertoire of the Kuyekukyeku Bamboo Orchestra were audio recorded and the daily life in the village was photographed. Before I could use my audio recorder and camera, I had to first seek the permission of the people in the village, which did not pose any problems. Actually, almost everyone wanted to have their pictures taken and voices recorded. It is important to note that my observations of daily life may have been impacted by my presence as a foreigner. For example, when I asked to photograph the Orchestra members and their instruments, they asked me to wait as they changed into their best church clothes.

The History of Mosomagor

Mosomagor lies in the Central Region on the eastern side of Kakum National Park about 40 kilometers northwest of Cape Coast, a prominent fishing village. This remote village was established in 1965 when Yao Anorh left his home to pursue fertile farmland. Anorh, with his wife and children, left Agona Abordom (located in the Central Region of Ghana) for Amoabin (also in the Central Region). In Amoabin, Anorh went to the chief, Asona Abusuapene Kwaku Jamina (commonly known as Nana Mosi because of his resemblance to the Mosi people of the Northern Region), and asked him if there was any land in the surrounding area that he could obtain to begin a cocoa farm. Anorh's tie to Nana Mosi came through the Asona Abusua Womprekwa royal family to which they both belonged. This gave Nana Mosi a good reason to give Anorh a plot of land in the deep forest about seven kilometers northwest of Amoabin. Anorh established his cocoa farm with his

wife and then sent word to all of his relatives in the Central Region, informing them of the abundant and very promising farmland that surrounded him.

Within the first four years, seven families came from various areas of the Central Region to join Anorh in the forest. Upon arrival, these families established their own farms quite some distance from Anorh and their other neighbors. Once this was brought to Nana Mosi's attention, he sent word to Anorh of his disapproval of this arrangement and noted his desire to see them merge together and form a single village. It was now Anorh's mission to bring his family and friends together. The name "Mosomagor" was born out of this effort made by Anorh. He told the families of Nana Mosi's desire and stated, "*me ne me mba so agor*," which, translated from Fante to English, means "me and my children are up to enough number to play." What Anorh meant by this was, "there wasn't any reason for the families to be separated from each other. He and his family were able to enjoy many good times together and the more that joined them, the better" (Abro, 1998). The families admired this saying so much that they decided it was a proper name for their new village. It was then combined and shortened, giving rise to "Mosomagor." In the following years, many families journeyed to Mosomagor. These families were no longer comprised of only "direct" relatives of Anorh. The wives of Anorh's brothers sent word to their fathers, uncles, brothers, and friends who spread the news of this farming village to their friends and members of their extended family. Within fifteen years, the number of families in Mosomagor rose from seven to nearly twenty-five.

Cocoa was the most popular crop to farm. Villagers who did not farm cocoa farmed cassava melon, corn, yams, or plantain. Everyone in the family played an active role in farming most days of the week. Common farm duties included weeding, harvesting, or gathering firewood for cooking. After harvesting was completed, the women took the goods to Amoabin and sold them in the market. The market was the village's main source of income. Also taken to the market to be sold was the bush meat killed in the forest. This bush meat was comprised of antelope, monkey, bird, grass cutter, and other small rodents (Abro, 1998). Usually teenagers were chosen to make the long treks into the deep forest to find the animals. Shotguns, bamboo spears, and slingshots were the preferred hunting weapons. Bush meat was abundant; any man was almost assured that he was not going to return home empty-handed. However, bush meat was not the only natural resource the deep forest had to offer. There was an unlimited supply of a vine that, once dried, became incredibly strong and was used for making baskets and holding bamboo structures together. Also available was the best wood used for making the "local toothbrushes" and an unlimited supply of easily accessible bamboo. The wood used for the local toothbrushes was a special wood that is found in the forest, pounded until soft, and then dried. Once dried, it is

broken up into bite-sized pieces that are chewed on and then taken and wiped over teeth, simulating a Western-style toothbrush. The villagers' farming and hunting efforts, coupled with gatherings from the deep forest, allowed Mosomagor to successfully exist as a self-sustaining village.

Village Life After the Establishment of Kakum National Park

In 1925, the Government of Ghana recognized the need to preserve its quickly depleting rainforest and established the Kakum Forest Reserve. This act of ecological conservation in no way hindered the surrounding villages' uses of the forest for its natural resources; it only prevented further logging from taking place within the official boundaries outlined by the government. It was not until 1989, when the Kakum Project began, and further on in 1992, when the Reserve was reconstructed as a National Park, that people in the surrounding villages became affected by this act of ecological conservation. This was when all "illegal activity," such as hunting, farming, and logging within the boundaries of the Reserve, was to stop within the boundaries of the National Park (Asamoah-Boatang, 1998). The new project proclaimed that one could not cross the boundaries of the Park without a guide and that if one was with a guide, he was not allowed to take anything from the forest back to the village.

This posed great problems for the people of Mosomagor and of the surrounding villages. The people of Mosomagor were now in a situation where they could no longer access the immense amount of bush meat and other natural resources from the deep forest. Villagers found themselves in a situation where they had to find other means of income to replace the income once generated from hunting. They also had to resort to finding materials such as the twine used in basket weaving and the wood used for local toothbrushes in the immediate area surrounding their farms. Once these materials were found, they were discovered to be of a lesser quality than those found in the deep forest. On a positive note, no Mosomagor villager lost a substantial amount of farmland. At most, a couple of meters along the perimeter were lost to the road that outlined the border of the Park. If one could provide proper papers declaring their ownership of the land, the government reimbursed them.

Some villagers took more drastic actions than others. Some learned a new trade, such as basket weaving or tailoring, which would yield a product that could be sold in the market. Others, mostly the young men who once spent their days in the forest hunting bush meat, moved out of the village to seek work elsewhere. These men relocated as close as Cape Coast or as far as the country's capital city, Accra, located 90 kilometers west of Cape Coast. Those who moved away felt there was nothing left in the village

to provide the same amount of income they once generated from hunting in the forest. As a result, many families split up, and greater responsibility and hardship were placed on the family members who remained in Mosomagor to farm.

The loss of numerous young men and some young women was detrimental to the village. Elders and young children were forced to take over the daily chores of the departed villagers, leading to a decline in productivity within the village. The people needed to create something in Mosomagor to replace the lost income and keep the young people from leaving. Solving this problem was a priority. In the attempt to remedy the situation and fashion a new livelihood within Mosomagor, the idea of the Kukyekukyeku Bamboo Orchestra was born.

The History of Bamboo Music in Mosomagor

With the birth of the Kukyekukyeku Bamboo Orchestra came a revival of what people saw as the traditional music of Mosomagor. Members of one family were responsible for introducing the bamboo music to the people of Mosomagor within the first four years of the village's existence, thereby helping to "invent tradition" (Hobsbawm and Ranger, 1992). This family was comprised of Kofi Mensah, Kojo Obo, Kwame Amoah, and Yao Abro, all originally from Gomoa Odinna (located in the Central Region, many miles northeast of Mosomagor). They brought the music with them during their initial move to Agona Abordom and then finally to Mosomagor. Kwame Amoah recognized the need for a recreational activity for people to enjoy and participate in during the evenings in Mosomagor. He took it upon himself to teach the music that was taught to him by his uncle first to his son Bizmark Amoah and then to the other villagers who developed an interest in learning this new music. It caught on quickly within the village, especially with the younger people, and became a popular evening activity. "In traditional African societies, music making is generally organized as a social event," and it is characteristic of many sub-Saharan societies to have the younger ones be the players of recreational music (Nketia, 1974). Songs were sung to accompany the rhythms played by the musicians. Among the many songs shared were songs of remembrance for those who had died while farming, songs comprised of proverbs and stories, and songs that dealt with harvesting the cocoa.

The music thrived in the village until 1976. At this point, the younger men who played the music began to marry and start families of their own. The time they allotted themselves to playing quickly diminished due to their new responsibilities, and soon bamboo music became non-existent in Mosomagor. It was not until 1986 that the sounds of bamboo music returned to the village.

At this time, the younger boys in the village were becoming increasingly interested in girls. The boys devised a plan that would get the girls out of their houses and away from the overly protective eyes of their fathers. Their plan was to start playing the bamboo music again in the evenings. This would initiate a social gathering and give good reason for people-most importantly young girls-to leave their houses to join in the singing and dancing.

The boys' plan worked, and the music lasted until 1989. Increased family responsibilities were not to blame this time. Rather, the newly implemented Kakum Park Project and the associated regulations were responsible. Young boys began to leave the village in search of work to supplement the loss of family income from hunting. Mosomagor remained quiet until 1994 when Bizmark Amoah envisioned the possible economic potential of having an organized bamboo orchestra in the village.

The History of the Kukyekukyeku Bamboo Orchestra

In April of 1994, while Amoah was selling FAN Milk ice-cream products in the streets of Cape Coast, he heard from a distant, blaring radio an announcement from the newly formed AGORO/CILTAD project. They were asking for anyone interested in perfecting or learning a traditional music or dance to come and join them at their center. The announcer also mentioned that AGORO was interested in helping to revive traditional music.

Amoah took the following day off from work and went to the AGORO people to talk with them about their proposal. There he met Mr. Okyrgmar, who was to decide whether or not AGORO would administer this help. Okyrgmar was the first person Amoah spoke with at AGORO about the bamboo music of Mosomagor and the recent problems the people were facing because of the establishment of Kakum National Park. Amoah also shared with Mr. Okyrgmar his thoughts on the revival of the music and its potential for making money. Amoah envisioned that the increased economic income generated from the orchestra would deter the youth from leaving the village to find work outside Mosomagor. Mr. Okyrgmar became quite interested in the state of Mosomagor and told Amoah that AGORO would assist him in trying to revive the bamboo music.

That night Amoah traveled back to Mosomagor with an AGORO pamphlet and shared the events of the day with his family and friends. The people were excited about the new idea, and the youth gathered to sing songs that night. The following day many did not go out to the farm but instead went to the bush to get bamboo to make instruments. During the next four days, the air was filled with the sounds of bamboo music. As Amoah was the only person in the village who had played the music in the past, he

was the teacher for all interested in playing. Not everyone wanted to be a drummer. Some had an interest in singing while others desired to dance. The people had many songs in their repertoire, but they only knew two dances at the time.

Amoah traveled back to Cape Coast to inform the people at AGORO that they were ready for them to visit to the village and experience the bamboo music and dancing. This time Amoah was directed to Selete Nyomi, the director of the AGORO/CILTAD project. Nyomi was also impressed with Amoah's enthusiasm and drive to revive the bamboo music of Mosomagor. He sent Amoah back to the village with the promise of coming there soon to hear the bamboo music. Many months passed before Nyomi traveled to Mosomagor. Finally, in early December of 1994, Nyomi found the time and made the journey from Cape Coast. He enjoyed the villagers' performance immensely. Before leaving, Nyomi donated 10,000 cedis to the village, requesting that in return, the orchestra members spend the next month polishing up their music (at the time this study was done, the exchange rate was 2,300 cedis for 1 USD). That day, the Kukyekukyeku Bamboo Orchestra was officially born. Amoah gave the name to the group simply because he "liked the way *kukyekukyeku* sounded" (Amoah, 1998).

In the following months, there was much interaction between the orchestra and AGORO. A video sample of the Orchestra was recorded and sent to the Ghana Broadcasting Company (GBC) for a public showing in late January of 1995. Early February brought the Danish representative of AGORO to Mosomagor for four days to learn and assess the music and village life. He left the village assuring them of the future profits to be made from the relationship with AGORO. Also in early February, AGORO sent four female dance instructors to the village to teach dances to those interested. The dances were to accompany the bamboo music. The instructors continued visiting the village on a regular basis, but transportation became a problem. Despite the absence of the dance instructors, the young men in the village continued to play the bamboo music day after day. In January 1996, AGORO purchased a new truck and resumed in sending a dance instructor to the village every Monday. Zie was the first instructor to come. He returned every week for the remainder of the year. In 1997, Zie was replaced by Skinny, who continues to come every other week.

AGORO, along with providing dance instruction, acted as the Orchestra's promoter by helping to arrange times and places for the Orchestra to perform. As a result, they have had many performances in recent years. The Orchestra performed in the 1995 Kidda Fest at the National Theater in Accra. At the end of the year, they performed at the Kakum National Park's entrance for its grand opening. During 1996, the Orchestra appeared at the Cape Coast

National Theater and at the Cape Coast Castle. In 1997, they performed once again at the Kidda Fest in Accra and at the grand opening of the visitor's center at the western entrance of Kakum National Park later in the year. Most recently, in 1998, they were invited to play at a farewell ceremony hosted by AGORO for the Danish Ambassador to Ghana, who was leaving to take a post in another country. Amidst the large performances, the Orchestra performed numerous times in Mosomagor for tourists passing through to take hikes in the National Park. They continue to perform for classes of school children whose teachers bring them to experience traditional dance and music. More often than not, the Orchestra is paid for their performances, receiving the bulk of their profits from performances in the village for tourists.

Instruments

The instruments in the Orchestra consist of bamboo stamping tubes and a bell. These instruments fall under the general category of idiophones, which are hollowed-out instruments in which the vibration of the body creates the instrument's sound. According to J.H.K. Nketia (1963), "of the instruments found in Ghana, idiophones are the most common." Furthermore, "their development began many thousands of years ago when early man first clashed together sticks, stones, and bones to emphasize the rhythms of his clapping hands and stamping feet" (The Diagram Group, 1976). The Orchestra is comprised of four different bamboo-stamping tubes. The stamping tubes are the original instruments used by the founders of Mosomagor. Four new instruments have been added following the formation of the Kukyekukyeku Bamboo Orchestra:

1. *Ma-yen-koham* (side drums): This instrument consists of two small single segmented bamboo pieces of slightly different lengths—a higher pitched tube and a lower pitched tube (see Figure 1). When played, the musician holds one in each hand and stamps them alternately onto the ground as well as hitting them together in the air to produce the desired rhythm. The name comes from this motion of hitting their sides together in the air. The role of the *ma-yen-koham* is to maintain a constant, underlying rhythm.
2. *Pempa*: This is the bass stamping tube. It is made out of a mature stick of bamboo, standing two segments high with at least a four-inch diameter opening at the top (see Figure 2). This stamping tube differs from the others in that one must stand to play it. The *pempa* has two sounds: 1) the closed, tight sound, the *pem*, which is made when one hand is placed over the opening as it is hit against the ground and 2) the open, full tone, the *pa*, which is achieved when the opening is left uncovered as it is struck against the ground. The *pempa*, like the *ma-yen-koham*, also maintains a steady, underlying rhythm.



Figure 1

Ma-yen-koham



Figure 2

Pempa

3. *Pepempa*: This is a single segmented piece of bamboo, approximately three inches in diameter (see Figure 3). It is also played by hitting its base against the ground, and the tone is controlled by either cupping the opening at the top with one's hand or leaving it open. The *pepempa* differs from the previous two instruments in its freedom to improvise and send messages within its basic rhythm.

4. *Kokobo* (talking drum): The *kokobo* is comprised of two bamboo tubes, one held in each hand (see Figure 4). One tube is two segments long (approximately two feet and much thinner than the *pempa*), while the other is a *pepempa*. The player of the *kokobo* is considered the master drummer, or leader of the Orchestra. He is responsible for playing phrases that may instruct the Orchestra to begin playing or to come to a close. Although the *kokobo* has a set rhythm, it spends much of its time deviating from it. According to J.H.K. Nketia (1963), "the master drum is, of course, the most important of all, and naturally the one with the most elaborate part. It carries the rhythms that characterize the particular music or dance." The master drummer is the storyteller, using the various tones he is able to produce with his two tubes to pound out old proverbs and stories.



Figure 3

Pepempa



Figure 4

Kokobo

The first American to get involved with the process of turning Kakum Reserve into a National Park was an environmentalist, Mr. Markum, who desired to educate Ghanaians of the importance of preserving the rain forest. In December of 1995, Mr. Markum came to the Orchestra

with a request. He sought the help of the Orchestra to help create an educational performance that would teach children about the various life forms that inhabit the rain forest. The members were eager to assist Mr. Markum. He taught the members two English songs to accompany the bamboo music. Once they learned the songs, he took them into Accra with his animals to perform for children in a few select schools. It was with the introduction of the two English songs that Mr. Markum introduced and added the bell to the Orchestra. The bell has become the backbone of the Orchestra, keeping precise time for the musicians. Amoah made some additions of his own to the Orchestra. These consist of a small piece of bamboo (open at both ends and held horizontally by two pieces of bamboo), a small xylophone, and a horn (see Figure 5). Both the individual piece of bamboo and the xylophone are played by the bell player and are intended to complement and accompany the rhythm of the bell. The horn is the latest addition to the orchestra and is rarely ever incorporated into the Orchestra's repertoire for unspecified reasons. It consists of a thin, short piece of bamboo with a calabash resonator attached to one end.



Figure 5

Xylophone and bell

Bamboo Rhythms

The musical rhythms played by the Orchestra are composed of various interlocking patterns. These interlocking patterns are repetitive, incorporating occasional variations. This is representative of the strong sense of social cohesiveness that exists within the Fante people of Mosomagor, as well as many other sub-Saharan African cultures. According to Robert Garfias (1997), "the combination of these...independent patterns fit together to create a whole pattern, much like the pieces of a jigsaw puzzle. In this way the interdependence of the members of the community is reflected in its music."

Highlife is the name of the particular rhythm arrangement most often played by the Orchestra; it is unknown if a correlation exists between this individual pattern and the popular Ghanaian music also referred to as highlife. Recent years have added four new bamboo rhythms in addition to the original highlife rhythm. Three of the rhythms, gospel, slow, and cha-cha-cha, were the direct

product of a short-lived vocal band, which one villager attempted to introduce to the people after returning from his travels in the mid-1980s. The vocal band was comprised of congas, maracas, an acoustic guitar, and a singer. Amoah and other bamboo players recalled the different rhythms and sounds of the various instruments and then attempted to recreate them with their bamboo instruments. This was a popular method utilized by the bamboo players to give birth to new rhythms.

A popular recreational rhythm that arose from this method of imitation is the cha-cha-cha. This rhythm was constructed to accompany a couple of songs that the villagers learned from the vocal bandleader. The cha-cha-cha rhythm has a Latin feel and is played in 2/4 time. A new style of playing the *pepempa* was contrived through the creation of the cha-cha-cha rhythm. The musician holds one *pepempa* in each hand, keeping one closed and the other open at the top to create the sounds similar to those a conga player would produce. Following the invention of the cha-cha-cha rhythm came the creation of two more rhythms: 1) gospel, a recreational rhythm, and 2) slow, a rhythm specifically used to accompany sorrowful songs and for funerals.

The *konuku* rhythm is the latest rhythm adapted into the Orchestra's repertoire. This rhythm is an *adowa* rhythm of the Ashanti people. Zie introduced *konuku* to the bamboo players soon after he began coming to the village to teach them dances. After studying the patterns played by the *adowa* drummers in Kumasi (a prominent town in central Ghana), he went to Mosomagor and attempted to recreate these patterns with the bamboo instruments. Just like the previously mentioned rhythms, this one is also meant for recreational purposes and is most commonly played in addition to the highlife rhythm at performances.

Song Repertoire

The Kukyekukyeku Bamboo Orchestra's repertoire is quite large. Combining the traditional Fante songs of past generations with those recently adopted songs in Twi, Ga, Hausa, and Samana, has made the Orchestra's repertoire extensive. The songs are broken up into three sub-categories: performance, religious, and children's.

Songs placed into the first category are those that are sung to announce forthcoming performances and those sung on the way to performances. Some popular examples of performance songs include (Kwesi, 1998):

Mpanifo -a ye ma mo atenase-o-o
Mpanifo-a ye ma mo atenase-o-o
Mpanifo yen de yefri de bok.

We have come to entertain you.
 You have sat down before I have come.
 We come from a place with no problems.

This song is sung at the start of a performance and informs the audience that the Orchestra has come to entertain. The next song is one that is sung after the Orchestra has returned home after a performance.

Ose ye-e, Mama ay bra-o
Ose ye-e ye k ya-y ba-o.

Everyone, we are tired.
 Everyone, we have come back.

Religious songs are sung at funerals and to oneself as a person mourns the death of a relative. They also are sung at performances to commemorate the death of loved ones. If during the song one has remembered a dead relative, he takes money up to the performers and places it on their heads in gratitude for enabling him to remember his loved ones. An example of a religious song is the following:

Saaman, Saaman Nyimpa n'ewie o,
Ewie o saaman
Saaman nyimpa n'ewie o, n'ewie o saaman.

After someone has died,
 the maggots are the only ones
 who get to enjoy them.

There are many children's songs sung in Mosomagor. Along with performances by the younger members of the Orchestra, they are sung throughout the village. Children may dance to them, play games to them, or just sit and sing them while watching their mothers prepare meals. An example of a popular children's song is:

Atseyaa dede-e, Astseyaa dede-e, Awuraba.
Atseyaa dede-e, Astseyaa dede-e, Awuraba.
Moa mo p asa na asa na ada-e
Mo be saa ma ye hwe.
Mo be saa ma ye hwe

Slim girl, slim girl, teenage girl.
 Slim girl, slim girl, teenage girl.
 You say you like to dance.
 There's dancing here, so let's see you dance.

Members of the Orchestra are now beginning to create their own songs. Although they did not have any examples to sing to me, they said that some would be ready for performances in the near future.

Membership and Training

It is quite simple to gain membership in the Orchestra. All are welcome to join, but to become an official member, one must have the 2,000 cedis to pay for a registration card, which is obtained from the people at AGORO. There are currently 20 official members in the Orchestra with only a select 15 participating in performances. Amoah chooses the 15 based on the amount of effort shown by the individual during each rehearsal before the performance. The ages of the members range from nine to 35 years, with the majority of them being in their late teens and early twenties. The Orchestra is still dominated by men, but the number of female members has risen in past years. The men continue to play the bamboo instruments exclusively, while the number of male and female singers and dancers make up a balanced ratio (see Appendix).

The training administered to all involved is more indirect than direct. Formal instruction of the bamboo rhythms and the songs is non-existent. Individuals who are interested in learning the rhythms take it upon themselves to sit around and listen to the group practice in the early evenings. Young children learn the dances and bamboo rhythms indirectly from consistently being exposed to the sounds of the Orchestra during the members' practices. The only formal instruction administered to the members of the Orchestra occurs when Skinny visits the village every other Wednesday to teach new dances to the dancers. Non-members are not allowed to join the members during this rehearsal, but they are allowed to dance with them during the couple of rehearsals they have each week. The songs sung in the orchestra are all ones that the village has been singing for years. Thus, formal instruction is unnecessary for the interested singers.

Effects of Tourism on Mosomagor

Beginning with the establishment of Kakum National Park and continuing with AGORO's recent involvement in the village, tourism has begun to make a mark on Mosomagor. From the foreign traveler passing through to meet a guide at the eastern entrance of Kakum National Park to the foreign students coming through AGORO to live in the village and study the bamboo music and dance, tourism has been the cause of many socioeconomic changes in Mosomagor.

The effects on the village itself have been substantial in recent years. In the area of community development alone,

Mosomagor has seen many changes. The 20 kilometer stretch of the unmaintained dirt road leading from Fante Yan Kumasi to Mosomagor has been widened and smoothed over as a result of Mosomagor becoming a gateway to the eastern entrance of Kakum National Park. This has not only made it easier for tourists to make their way into the Park, but it has also accommodated the people's desires to have a quicker and less strenuous mode of transportation out of Mosomagor. Before the road was smoothed over, taxis could not make their way along the eight-kilometer stretch of dirt road between Mosomagor and Amoabin (a village with a large market, situated between Fante Yan Kumasi and Mosomagor). This forced the people, primarily women, to walk the distance to the taxi junction when they needed to leave the village to sell their goods at the market, or to go elsewhere for supplies. When walking, the women were limited to the amount of goods that could be carried on top of their heads. The long journey was too physically strenuous on the older men and women and thus, was only made by the younger, physically fit people.

The accessibility of taxis in the village opened up the possibility of a larger number of people to make the trip and for more goods to be taken with them to the market to be sold. People now also have the option of traveling to well-equipped medical facilities in Cape Coast to seek cures for illnesses that could not otherwise be remedied in the village. Where it once took nearly six hours of travel to reach Cape Coast, it now only takes approximately two hours.

A six-room guesthouse is now in the works at Mosomagor. It will be primarily used to accommodate the Danish students associated with AGORO. Currently, the village only has the means to accommodate one student at a time. The guesthouse will enable AGORO to create a new, much desired element to their program in which the entire group of Danish students can travel to and stay for a period of time in Mosomagor to study the bamboo music and dance. In addition to the Danish students, the guesthouse will also accommodate any visitors who venture to that side of Kakum National Forest to visit the planned visitors' center and to hike. Members of the village are to be trained as forest guides, park rangers, and forest guards whose duties it would be to protect against poachers and loggers. These initiatives are seen as alternatives for the young people in order to enable them to stay with their families and make a sufficient amount of money locally. Currently, a common recognition of the potential arrival of good paying jobs (ones that provide a consistent source of income) in Mosomagor has kept a number of the young people from leaving and has caused an increase in the village's overall population. One can only speculate that the number of people residing in Mosomagor will increase to an even greater number once these jobs are actually made available and the new Kakum National Park visitors' center is built.

Tourism has the potential for having positive effects on Mosomagor. The healthy income generated from the accommodations at the guesthouse and the selling of crafts and food raises personal income, creating more money for the village. This, in turn, means that the dilapidated schools could have a chance to be refurbished and a better health care system or center could be developed.

Unfortunately, there are also negative repercussions of the increased development in Mosomagor and the surrounding areas as a result of tourism. First, there is the potential threat of urbanization facilitated by the constant contact with foreign visitors. Urbanization creates a more complex set of needs and wants within individuals. Exposure to foreigners' "high-tech" watches, tape players, jewelry, and other "luxury" items has the potential of fostering a greater level of materialism throughout the village and especially among the youth.

Materialism causes individuals to acquire a new set of priorities. For example, instead of buying the plow that he so desperately needs to maintain his farm or buying enough food to secure his family for the coming weeks, a farmer might take the little money made selling his goods at the market and buy one of the previously-mentioned luxury items. This is not to say that the people of Mosomagor are not entitled to those items. Rather, in a situation where the basic items needed for survival and sustenance are difficult to acquire (due to an extremely low level of personal income) it would be self-destructive to let materialism stand in the way of providing for one's self and family. An individual needs to secure enough food and shelter for his family and adequate supplies for the survival of his business before spending money on luxury items. Also, if all the youths began to stay because of the higher potential of finding jobs and making money, the population would increase at a faster rate, causing farmland to become scarce. On the other hand, materialism could have a reverse effect in that the youths would still leave to pursue a greater potential of making enough money in the cities to live like the visiting foreigners.

There have also been both positive and negative effects of tourism on the Orchestra. The most positive effect was the revival of the bamboo music itself. If the potential for making money from the music had not arisen, then it could only be speculated as to when or if the music would have ever come back to the people of Mosomagor. The Kukyekukyeku Bamboo Orchestra has consequently become the main focus of each person in the community for its potential to cure the socioeconomic problems in the village. Most of the community belongs to it either directly or indirectly. The Orchestra has provided the people of Mosomagor with a unifying tool to construct and maintain village cohesiveness.

A negative, even tragic, effect of tourism is that the people no longer play music just for recreational purposes. During the three weeks I lived with these people, I never saw them play purely for their own personal enjoyment. Most often, the only times the music was played was during dancing lessons, rehearsing for performances, or in giving performances. This occurs because everyone who currently plays started playing for the purpose of making money. It is seen now as a job or a career and has become disassociated from daily life, in contrast to its earlier, recreational purposes. In fact, when I interviewed about half of the orchestra members, they all said that they would have left the village to find work elsewhere if the bamboo orchestra did not exist. They also said they had no intention or desire to play the bamboo music until Amoah came to them with the idea of forming an orchestra that could generate sufficient income.

Conclusion

Many of the villages' high-quality resources were taken away and people were restricted from living on land they considered their own. The current situation is a direct result of a select group of government officials and environmentalists' lack of consideration for the severe socioeconomic consequences of ecological conservation on local inhabitants. A desire to retain and preserve an area of rainforest disrupted the social structure of Mosomagor.

Through this study, we see how the people of Mosomagor are coping with their changing environment. Establishing the Kukyekukyeku Bamboo Orchestra and building a guesthouse are both great initiatives capable of generating long-term income for everyone in the village. The Orchestra is also providing the village with a means to retain and represent a portion of their cultural heritage, the "traditional" bamboo music. The increase in tourism due to the establishment of Kakum National Park has led to better roads, has generated jobs, and has led to a decline in the number of young people making the exodus out of the village in search of means for a "better life."

Although negative repercussions may occur, at this time, Mosomagor and its inhabitants appear to be moving in a positive direction. It is much too early to disregard the current initiatives by the people to adapt to the changes they have faced. Only time will tell if these initiatives are the most beneficial.

Appendix: The Members of the Kukyekukyeku Bamboo Orchestra as of May 1998 (age)

Bizmark Amoah (30) - leader/founder of the Orchestra
Charles Edoo (27) - musician
Isaac Kojo Edua (23) - musician
Isaac Nana Kwesi (32) - musician
Ishmel Mensah (20) - musician
Joeseph Andoh (20) - musician
Samual Panford (22) - musician
Benjamin Mensah (12) - musician
Samual Assen (9) - musician
James Kojo Panford (28) - drummer/singer
Felicia Mensah (35) - singer
Elizabeth Abo (35) - singer
Mary Panford (21) - singer/dancer
Alex Yao Arther (21) - dancer
Philomina Dankwaa (20) - dancer
Kate Mensah (19) - dancer
Eric Essel (19) - dancer
Cecila Amoah (19) - dancer
Samual Appong (17) - dancer
John Kofi Assan (15) - dancer

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