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The Complexities of Association and Assimilation

An Ethnographic Overview

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The various patterns of association and assimilation documented in the present volume call for explanation in terms of a wider framework of the inherent diversity subsumed by the category of people now labeled "Bushman," "San," "Basarwa," or "Khoe." This paper focuses both on that wider framework and on the contextualization of issues raised by other authors in this volume. We shall draw particularly on the comparative theoretical approach Barnard has employed in earlier work (e.g., Barnard 1992a) and on our understanding of the more recent socio-political dimensions of association and assimilation.

Contact with other ethnic groups has historically displayed a range of implications for foragers in southern Africa. Total assimilation has occurred, for example, with groups absorbed into coastal Nguni cultures over the last millennium. Domination and slavery in some parts of the Kalahari reduced some Basarwa to a distinct underclass. Yet, in other parts of the Kalahari, relative isolation (though, of course, never total isolation) has been maintained until recent years. Some groups have accepted periodic contact for purposes of trade, and others have chosen to live alongside Bantu-speakers, yet have retained a distinct identity. In the colonial and

postcolonial eras, social, environmental, and political pressures have resulted in new forms of interaction.

An understanding of such recent changes can shed light on earlier points of contact and styles of contact, such as those implicated in the "Kalahari debate" (see, e.g., Barnard 1992b). An understanding of earlier changes and long-standing relations of symbiosis and of subjugation might also be of value in the struggle of contemporary groups to maintain their identities and develop their livelihood opportunities. Certainly these historical relations play a prominent role in the way many Bushmen today speak about their present circumstances. Thus the present and the past merge, as contemporary problems and historical ones, the practical and the theoretical, shed light upon each other.

ETHNIC DIVERSITY

In order to understand the dynamics and the complexity of association and assimilation, an excursion into the ethnic diversity of southern Africa's Bushmen populations is necessary. Ethnic diversity is here conceived according to two main factors: cultural difference (including cultural features related to environment and long-standing outside influence) and linguistic difference.

With regard to cultural difference, a number of groups, for example G/wi and G//ana of Botswana's Central Kalahari Game Reserve, have been essentially desert-dwelling people who have hunted and gathered for the bulk of their subsistence until just a few decades ago. //Anikhwe and Bugakhwe—so-called "River Bushmen" of the Okavango River area—hunted, gathered, and fished, and many have lived for extended periods in close association with neighboring agropastoralists. Shua and other groups in eastern Botswana have long herded livestock, both others' and their own (see map, Fig. 9.1).

With regard to linguistic difference, many groups speak languages of the Khoe group. These include Kūa studied by Susan Kent, various groups in eastern Botswana such as Shua, "River Bushmen" of the Okavango River and Delta, and Nharo and neighboring groups in western Botswana. Hai//om speak not a "Khoe Bushman" language, but Nama-Damara or Khoekhoe—the same Khoe language as herding peoples in Namibia. Non-Khoe-speaking "Bushman" include !Kung or Ju/'hoansi in the northern Kalahari, as well as !Xoõ, and Eastern ≠Hoã, /'Auni and ≠Khomani, and other southern groups. The Khoe-speaking/non-Khoe-speaking distinction is important in marking a number of cultural differences, notably in aspects of kinship (Barnard 1992a:passim).

!Kung or Ju/'hoansi

The terms !Kung and Ju/'hoansi are widely known. Usage varies, but !Kung is generally taken to be the wider label, referring to all those from southern Angola to

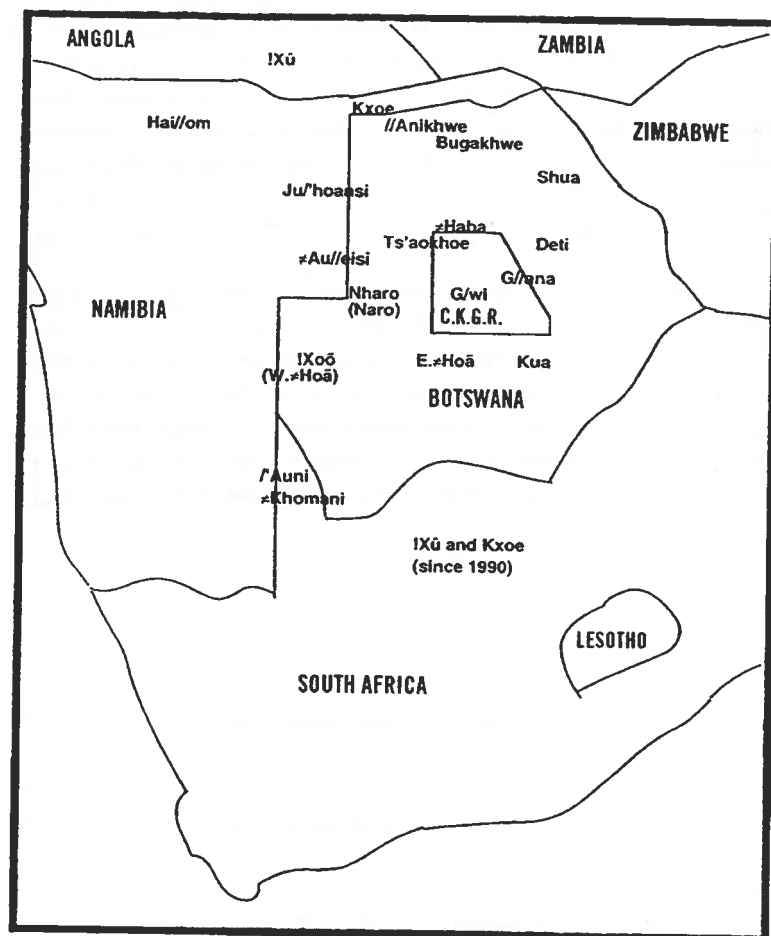


Figure 9.1. Bushman groups mentioned in the text.

central-western Botswana who speak !Kung or Ju/'hoansi dialects. In reality, this is the preferred term only of those who live in the far north, in Angola, while those commonly called !Kung in the works of writers such as Marshall (e.g., 1976, 1999) and Lee in his earlier works (e.g., 1979) tend to call themselves Ju/'hoansi or "real people" (cf. Lee 1993; and Lee's paper in the present volume).

It is useful to think of the population as a whole as consisting of three main ethnolinguistic groups—Ju/'hoansi proper or Central !Kung of northern Botswana and Namibia, !Xú or Northern !Kung of Angola, and #Au//eisi or Southern !Kung of the Ghanzi district of Botswana. The labels identify indigenously defined dialect areas,

but they also correspond roughly to environmental zones. In total, the !Kung-speaking population may number as many as 25,000 or even 30,000. We shall concentrate here on Ju/'hoansi. #Au//eisi will be discussed below, together with Nharo whose former lands they now occupy. One migration worth noting here, however, is that of the !Xú soldiers, who, together with a number of Kxoc, had fought on the South African side in the Namibian war of liberation. In 1990 some 4,000 !Xú and Kxoe soldiers and their families were resettled at Schmidtsdrift, near Kimberley, South Africa. Since then a number of researchers have published academic articles on the challenges of this resettled community (see, e.g., Steyn 1994; Sharp and Douglas 1996), and with further resettlement and the recent development of new economic enterprises, academic interest in their situation is growing once again.

In many Ju/'hoansi areas there have been permanent water holes, and, until the 1960s, each band camped at one of these during the winter dry season. Often several bands, numbering on average some 25 people or more, shared the same permanent water hole and therefore the same winter location. Most water holes were, even then, also shared by Ovaherero and Batswana pastoralists apparently enjoying mutually beneficial relationships with resident Ju/'hoansi. Few permanent water holes remain, and most Ju/'hoansi today live all year round at the permanent water sources afforded by cattle-post and village boreholes. Band territories (termed *n/oresi*) overlapped, while areas without adequate resources were often unclaimed by any band. All this has changed greatly in many areas, first because of the disruption of the long Namibian war, especially in the 1980s (Marshall and Ritchie 1984), and later because of changes brought about by Namibian independence in 1990. Namibian independence brought about both beneficial new development efforts on the part of the government, and detrimental results of the return of Ovaherero pastoralists from their nearly 90-year exile in Botswana, as well as increased militarization in northern Namibia once again in the late 1990s.

While extensive social and environmental changes have affected Ju/'hoansi populations, there were also major changes in the perception of this Bushman group, in particular, brought about by the advent of the "Kalahari debate" which continues to this day. As Lee puts it so eloquently in his chapter: "Where earlier ethnographers saw bands, tribes, and chiefdoms, revisionists saw only peasants and proletarians enmeshed in the coils of merchant capital, or dominated by regional markets and states." Of course, both the images presented by the two sides, and the true situation of Bushmen themselves, are far more complicated than that. Were that not the case, the debate would never have generated either the number of publications it has or the interest in those publications among anthropologists, historians, and archaeologists across wide spectrums of these disciplines.

The extensive details from oral history that Lee (Chapter 7, this volume) provides give evidence that within living memory Ju/'hoansi were in far less contact with

cattle-herders than in the 1960s when his own fieldwork revealed the presence of hundreds of cattle-herders using the same water holes as Ju/'hoansi. What is more, in the colonial period they felt themselves more autonomous than in recent history, in the sense that they could avoid the presence of other peoples and the authority of administrators and chiefs. It is often remarked that casual readers of some Ju/'hoansi ethnographies are left with the mistaken impression that these people live, or have lived until recently, in isolation both from other Bushman and from non-Bushman. In fact, Lee does not suggest that this has been the case. As he notes, Ju/'hoansi have long lived in contact with Ovaherero, Batawana, and Bakgalagadi. They have shared their land, served as clients in patron/client relations, and traded with such people for centuries (see also, e.g., Tlou 1985:28–29, 52–54).

So where does this leave the "Kalahari debate"? At its simplest level, there are really two facets of understanding that are of relevance here. On the one hand, we have the consideration of historical fact, and on the other we have the matter of emphasis within ethnography, granting that all ethnography is by necessity always partial (cf. Strathern 1991). In reality, it is more complicated. Historical fact, like ethnography, is also a matter of interpretation. It could be that Lee's informants have misremembered. That does not mean that the "facts" necessarily go against him, but only that what may have been important to travelers or early ethnographers (such as the presence of cattle) is not so important to hunter-gatherers. There is indeed no reason for us to disbelieve either Lee's informants or the travelers and early ethnographers, which gives cause for rethinking the history of the area once again. The history of the Kalahari has not simply been an ever-increasing trend from isolation to assimilation, but one of both diversity and fluctuation as a result of warfare, cattle disease, environmental change, and a host of other factors. There is no doubt that Passarge's (1907) famous account, so important for Wilmsen's (1989) arguments, took place at an extraordinary and unrepeatable time: that of the rinderpest epidemic of the late 1890s that decimated both the wildlife and cattle populations of Ngamiland.

Nharo and Related Groups and ≠Au//eisi

Nharo (Naro) live in the western part of Ghanzi district, mainly in the Ghanzi farms, and across the border in eastern Namibia. They number perhaps 9,000. In most Nharo areas there is a relatively good water supply, due partly to their locations along Ghanzi ridge. Bakgalagadi entered the territory in the early nineteenth century, and Afrikaners arrived to stay in the 1890s. To the northeast live Ts'aokhoe and some smaller groups, who are all closely related to Nharo. Natural water holes were very plentiful in the late nineteenth century, and were probably more numerous than in any other part of the Kalahari. Today, these have largely been replaced by farm and government boreholes. In the nineteenth century, Nharo generally

spent the dry season camped at large permanent water holes and the wet season scattered among the seasonally filled pans. However, this pattern has changed as a result of the influx of ranchers over the past hundred years. Nharo settlements now are relatively permanent, although individuals often move freely from settlement to settlement within recognized territories that overlap the farm boundaries.

The first permanent white settlers arrived in Ghanzi in 1898, but the most drastic changes seem to have occurred since the early 1960s when the system of land tenure was changed from leasehold to freehold and the farms underwent a period of expansion. During this period farms were fenced, better-quality livestock were brought in, engine-pump boreholes were introduced, and for the first time, farm workers came to be paid in cash. The abundance of boreholes led to the formation of smaller bands—sometimes only a single nuclear family at each borehole (see, e.g., Barnard 1980; Guenther 1986a). Newer farmers increased the density of livestock, brought in high-velocity rifles (and killed off much of the game), and hired Bakgalagadi and Batswana herdsmen in preference to the indigenous Nharo. Thus many Nharo, who had by this time become part-time herdsmen, lost the opportunity to work, but also found hunting and gathering increasingly difficult because of the scarcity of vegetable resources or game animals in the area. As Guenther (Chapter 5, this volume) notes, this led to increasing dependence on farmers.

As Guenther also notes, many patterns associated with Nharo and ≠Au//eisi culture persisted into the second half of the twentieth century. This is despite contact with white farmers since the 1890s and with Bakgalagadi, Batawana, and Barolong pastoralists for much longer. Guenther's focus is mainly historical, concentrating on the general trajectory of change during and since the nineteenth century. Comparing his fieldwork with Barnard reveals the diversity within the western Ghanzi district. During his fieldwork in the 1970s, for example, Barnard found Nharo of the Hanahai Valley who retained distinct aspects of settlement, subsistence, and kinship. Barnard worked mainly on the southern edge of the Ghanzi farms, where during years of abundant resources (such as the mid-1970s) it was possible for Nharo to hunt and gather extensively even within the farming area. Guenther began work a few years before and his fieldwork was mainly at D'Kar, a mission-owned farm in the interior of the farming area, where there had even then been a closer association between Nharo and others, as well as a far greater dependence on nonwild foods.

Guenther also comments on the reports of Heinrich Schinz, Siegfried Passarge, Dorothea Bleek and others on the territoriality of the Nharo in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This is borne out in more recent times, even where Nharo groups have been resettled. Barnard (1986:48–50) has noted that Nharo from different band clusters settled at Hanahai (where they occupy separate settlements according to place of origin) were in 1980s buying and selling meat across historical band-cluster boundaries, whereas they shared meat within the confines of band

clusters. The former large-scale territorial boundaries had become localized, and territoriality manifested as social (sharing) exclusion.

As Guenther says, foraging continued through the twentieth century, coupled with a transfer of the dependency relationship from Batswana and Bakgalagadi (and some Nama) overlords to white (mainly Afrikaans-speaking) ones. Yet this did not mark a greater degree of acculturation. Quite the contrary, the evidence for the Kalahari as a whole suggests that close association between Bushman and their black neighbors has led to greater social change than where the overlords are white (cf. Barnard and Widlok 1996). This contradicts earlier assumptions, such as that implicit in Silberbauer's *Bushman Survey Report* (1965:114–138), that suggest degrees of acculturation ranging from independent, to dependent on black agropastoralists, to dependent on white farmers. Not only is the situation more complicated than that, both historically and in the present (there are of course black farmers as well as white); there is no reason to assume that whites should bring any greater pressure for change. Perhaps the most telling note from Guenther's paper concerns the penchant for Bushmen to see "history" in terms of myths of origin, of racial and cultural differences in which animals represent *khoe* ("human" or especially "Bushman") pitted against Batswana or Afrikaners. This strikes us as an indication, on the part of Guenther's informants at least, of a vision of history in which primordial categories and great events are used to explain, or make sense of, the transitions that individuals observe in their own lifetimes.

Susan Kent (Chapter 6, this volume) points to several effects of contact between whites and foraging populations in southern Africa. What is striking is the diversity of white contact and the diverse effects that that contact had. While some whites killed Bushmen for sport, others tried to convert them to Christianity or assimilate them to Western ways. As European-introduced diseases spread, so too (albeit later) did Western medicine. The intolerance she reports has been rife throughout the history of whites in southern Africa, but some degree of symbiosis is to be found too even in cases where the economic domination of whites is obvious. What is striking about the writings on the Ghanzi farms is that where one author may emphasize conflict and marginality (e.g., Guenther 1986a) another, commenting on exactly the same time period, may emphasize benevolence and mutual respect (e.g., Russell and Russell 1979). Here again, the answer may lie in the great diversity of forms of interaction, even in such a relatively small area as the Ghanzi farms.

G/wi and G//ana

G/wi and G//ana are long-standing inhabitants of Botswana's Central Kalahari Game Reserve. Some who live in the Reserve also call themselves Kūa, an ethnic label more commonly associated with Basarwa to the south.

G/wi came to prominence in the 1960s through the work of George Silberbauer, who was then Ghanzi District Commissioner and Bushman Survey Officer. He served for six years in those posts, spending some three years, beginning in 1958, among G/wi at Xade (≠Xade) pan. This pan became the site of Silberbauer's borehole, in the south-central part of the Reserve. At least until the late 1970s, the Xade area was even known colloquially among Basarwa on the Ghanzi farms as "Silberbauer's farm." After Silberbauer, a number of ethnographers followed, notably Jiro Tanaka, Kazuyoshi Sugawara, Kazunobu Ikeya, and other Japanese scholars.

The Central Kalahari Game Reserve extends over more than 50,000 square kilometers and includes three diverse environmental zones: in the north, an zone of sand dunes with many species of trees and shrubs and large herds of migratory game; in the central area, a zone of flat bushveld; and in the south, a more heavily wooded zone. Only the southern and central zones contain enough edible plants to support permanent occupation. In the early 1960s G/wi band territory sizes were about the same as Ju/'hoansi ones, ranging in size from some 450 to 1,000 square kilometers, although their population size was somewhat larger, with an average of 57 people per band (Silberbauer 1972:295).

As studies by Tanaka (e.g., 1987) and others have shown, many changes have taken place in the Reserve since the time Silberbauer describes in his major publications. With the migration into the Reserve of several G//ana bands in the late 1960s, settlement patterns apparently became more flexible. Then with the drought of the late 1970s and early 1980s, many Central Kalahari Bushman bands migrated, at least seasonally, to areas outside the Reserve where borehole water and food distributed through Botswana's drought relief program were available. Despite legislation forbidding livestock in the Reserve, the number of donkeys and goats being kept by residents within the Reserve steadily increased through the 1970s and 1980s. Together with the increased human population, this put considerable pressure on the water and environmental resources around Xade. This is one of the reasons given as to why the Botswana government began in 1984 expressing its wish to remove the residents of Xade from the Reserve. Also of interest in this context are some of Ikeya's studies (e.g., 1993, 1996a, 1996b), which have shown that neither goat raising, nor handicraft production, nor attempts to cultivate melons and other crops have resulted in a transformation of the system of distribution or the value of sharing among G//ana and G/wi. Ikeya argues from detailed quantitative evidence that, in their eyes, wage labor is not a substitute for the maintenance of a flexible subsistence strategy; it is part of it.

Sugawara (Chapter 4, this volume) describes a number of changes that have taken place in the Reserve since the Botswana government's enforcement of the Tribal Grazing Land Policy in 1979. These often interrelated changes included the adoption of (illegal) equestrian hunting, the rapid increase in the number of goats,

migration to and concentrated settlement around the borehole at !Koi!kom, and growing dependence on government handouts. Among G/wi and G//ana, even names have been changed to Setswana forms, though it must be said that naming customs among these people do not play a central role in kinship and social identity in the same way as among, for example, Nharo or Ju/'hoansi (cf. Barnard 1992a:48–50, 150–152).

Sugawara relates a number of narratives on relations between Kūa (G/wi and G//ana) on the one hand, and Bakgalagadi and ≠Kebe (people of mixed ancestry) on the other. It is important to note that the term Kūa is used here as a generic term for “Bushmen” or “Basarwa” rather than specifically for the group from Khutse studied by Susan Kent. As Sugawara's narratives demonstrate, Bakgalagadi frequently exercise dominance over and even violence toward these Kūa in the Reserve area, in which both groups have lived for decades if not centuries (cf. Valiente-Noailles 1993:140–151).

The greatest changes have occurred since the resettlement of the majority of the population of Xade at Kx'oensakene (New ≠Xade or New Xade) in 1997. Sugawara notes with regret that the G/wi and G//ana strategy of “opportunistic subordination” involved in such a move is bound to fail, given the power of government and difficulty of understanding the intentions of this abstract alien entity—intentions which are indeed obscure even to its own agents.

Eastern and Northern Khoe Groups

The Eastern Khoe Bushmen comprise a number of groups scattered from the Kweneng District in the south to Ngamiland in the north. They may number as many as 50,000. Most live in the Central District, often as clients of Bamangwato, Bakgalagadi, Kalanga, and Ovaherero. The cultural (as opposed to linguistic) distinction between Central and Eastern Khoe Bushmen is a nebulous one, and in this regard it is useful to include among “Eastern” groups some G//ana who have migrated from the Central Kalahari Game Reserve to take up a more settled life among the cattle-herders to the south and east. The salient characteristics of “Eastern” groups, in this sense, are their association with herding people and their high degree of cultural and spatial association.

The Kalahari fringe area has drawn the attention of revisionist archaeologists (e.g., Denbow 1984, 1986). Of great significance is the fact that this archaeological work points to contacts between hunter-gatherer and herder-cultivator populations extending back over several centuries. This means that the Basarwa of the Kalahari fringe may be regarded not so much as recently acculturated, but as possessing a hybrid culture of some antiquity. Archaeological findings suggest a long period of contact and a clear association with the Great Zimbabwe culture, beginning over 1,000 years ago.

East of the Central Kalahari Game Reserve is a large population of mainly sedentary Bushmen who, like the Central Kalahari Bushmen, speak Khoe languages, but unlike the Central Kalahari Bushmen, are heavily integrated into the economies of Botswana and Kalanga (Hitchcock 1978). The Bushman groups there include the Shua, Deti, and others, who have lived in the area for centuries, and some G//ana who have migrated into the area in recent years. Estimates of Bushmen in this area vary from 8,000 to over 30,000, depending on, among other factors, whether individuals of Bushman descent who have lost either their original language or a predominantly hunting and gathering lifestyle are included.

In addition to their material difficulties, the Bushmen of eastern Botswana also face ideological ones. The cultural definition of Bushmen by Setswana society generally is that of low-status, poor, and marginal people. Bushmen own very few cattle, the most important prestige commodity in Setswana culture. Therefore, Bushman men in particular lack economic independence and their status tends to be defined accordingly. They are associated with the cattle post and the bush, and thus deprived of any significant role in village life (Motzafi 1986). The situation in the Kweneng District, immediately south of the Central Kalahari Game Reserve, is similar, although patron-client relationships are more recent in that region.

Bugakhwe, //Anikhwe, and Kxoc live on the riverine fringes of the northern Kalahari, and together number some 8,000 individuals (Brenzinger 1997). Although they have a long history of contact—even extensive intermarriage—with Bantu-speakers, this contact did not initially result in subordination to the extent experienced by many Bushmen elsewhere (Taylor 2000). In northern Botswana, most contact (in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries) was with Bayei, characterized by Livingstone (1857:56) as “Quakers of the body politic in Africa.” In contrast to the encounters between Bushmen and Bantu-speakers elsewhere, Bayei and Basarwa interacted on terms that were generally equal and amicable.

Stories of origin in the northern sandveld tell of an initial relationship of equality and mutual cooperation between Basarwa and Bayei. In most such stories told by Bushmen elsewhere, the separation between Basarwa hunter-gatherers and Bantu-speaking agropastoralists is spoken of as being due to the strength and trickery of Bantu-speakers (cf. Bieseke 1986:321–323 [for Ju/'hoansi]; Guenther 1989:65–68 [for Nharo]; Widlok 1999:46–56 [for Hai//om]). In northern Botswana, however, Basarwa instead speak of a relationship of mutual cooperation between Khara/'uma, the first Mosarwa, and the first Moyei. Furthermore, many Bayei refer to Basarwa in a generic sense as their “uncles” (mothers' brothers) as an acknowledgment not only of Basarwa being “first people,” but also of many Bayei having Basarwa ancestors.

Whereas most Bantu-speakers took Basarwa women whose subsequent offspring were then raised as their own, intermarriage took place in both directions between

Bayei and Basarwa, with Basarwa men taking Bayei wives and vice versa. The taking of non-Basarwa women by Basarwa men has not been common, but those examples documented have all involved (usually sedentary) northern Khoe: between Kxoe and Ovambo in northern Namibia (Gordon 1992:214); between Zama and Sekele/Mbukushu/Guangares/Mbuela in Angola (Almeida 1965); between Kxoe and Mbukushu/Mbwela (Köhler 1989b:395ff, 427ff); and between Ts'ixa and Bayei (Taylor 2000:42). Following the predominant pattern of virilocal (patrilocal) residence, children from such relationships have usually been brought up in the father's social milieu, therefore regarding themselves as Bushmen.

In contrast to these generally amicable relations, the rise of the Batawana kingdom in Ngamiland in the second half of the nineteenth century was marked by severe forms of violence against local Basarwa populations. While this was not unusual in the very hierarchically organized Setswana-speaking kingdoms of the nineteenth century (see, e.g., Morton 1994), the degree by which Batawana were outnumbered in Ngamiland by the populations they attempted to subjugate prompted particular excesses (Taylor 2000:48, 52–54), with Basarwa receiving the brunt of such violence. The response of many Basarwa at this time was to simply move beyond the reach of the Batawana state, enabled by kinship networks extending over vast distances, and consequent fluidity in the membership of territory-based social groups. However, fleeing was tantamount to surrendering claim to the land on which they lived, a cost that many Basarwa did not want to pay for the opportunity to escape subjugation. Together with a combination of Batawana hegemony that to an extent naturalized a strong social hierarchy, along with the strategic use of terror, Batswana achieved a feat that Morton (1994:239) points out was almost unique in Africa: that of reducing their immediate neighbors to bondage.

As Sadr (Chapter 2, this volume) points out, a number of writers have touched on the question of how one might distinguish in the archaeological record between isolated or encapsulated foragers and those subjugated by agropastoralists. However, his is one of the few studies to concentrate specifically on the transition from precontact hunting and gathering, to postcontact hunting and gathering, to the subjugation of a hunter-gatherer community by a herding population. Interestingly, he points out that subjugation would seem to be a temporary condition. In the Kweneng district (where his main concern lies) and elsewhere, Bushmen accepted their status as serfs when it suited them, and engaged in independent livelihoods when that suited them. The situation is complicated in the Kweneng case, due partly to well-documented trade relations in the nineteenth century. Sadr's confirmation of a continuity of material culture in the area until definite signs of occupation by non-hunter-gatherers suggests that foraging culture may have endured long after first contact and simply been replaced in the twentieth century, perhaps even with Bantu-speakers taking over the caves occupied for millennia by hunter-gatherers.

!Xoõ, /'Auni, and ≠Khomani

!Xoõ are few in number and call themselves by a huge variety of different names. !Xoõ (!Xõ) is the most common, along with ≠Hoā in the east and Tshasi in the south. They are known to the outside world mainly through the linguistic work of Anthony Traill and the anthropological publications of the late H. J. Heinz, whose superb 1966 M.A. thesis detailed their social organization (published as Heinz 1994).

!Xoõ live in a poor environment, and for that reason have been in many respects less influenced by pastoralist expansion than groups elsewhere in Botswana. They live mainly at water holes and boreholes in the west-central Kalahari, west of the Central Kalahari Game Reserve and south of Ghanzi ridge. Thus they do come into considerable contact both with the sparse pastoralist populations of the area and—until the trans-Kalahari highway was finished in 1997—with those engaged in cattle drives across the Kalahari. The population numbers only about 3,000. Heinz (e.g., 1994:49–114) described them as being highly “territorial,” as having clearly defined band cluster territories with strips of “no-man’s-land” between them, and with all three levels of their social organization—the family, the band, and the band cluster—territorially based.

/'Auni and ≠Khomani are the tiny population groups of the Kalahari Gemsbok National Park in South Africa, near the Namibian and Botswana borders. They were long ago linguistically absorbed into other population groups, notably the Nama and the Afrikaans-speaking “coloured” population of the Northern Cape. They were the subject of intensive investigations by a number of scholars in the early part of the twentieth century, especially in the 1930s, and the journal *Bantu Studies* devoted two issues to the apparently dwindling population. However, in 1982 and 1983 H. P. Steyn visited the area and found a remnant population still hunting and gathering (see Steyn 1984). Some still identified themselves as ≠Khomani, though all members of the community then spoke Nama. They gathered *isama* melons and hunted gemsbok and smaller, nonmigratory game. The continued existence of this group, in such a poor environment, shows the resilience and adaptability of Bushman populations.

Hai//om

Hai//om inhabit northern areas of Namibia, where they live in contact with white farmers and Ovambo agropastoralists. Thomas Widlok began intensive research on social change and economic relations among Hai//om in 1990. One of his findings is the discovery of what he calls an “inverse *mafisa*” system (Widlok 1999:113–118). In Botswana, the people who receive *mafisa* cattle to look after for others are generally less well off, often Basarwa. However, in the “inverse *mafisa*” system the poorer

Hai//om lend their livestock to wealthy Ovambo, who get to keep not only the milk but even the offspring of these animals. Why do Hai//om do it? It enables them to own livestock, but still to move about freely; and more significantly, it enables them to stave off traditional requests for sharing within their community, because their wealth in livestock is deposited elsewhere. Without this system, Hai//om would be under great pressure from relatives to slaughter their animals. The existence of both systems highlights the complexity of hunter/herder relations and draws attention to the fact that such relations can differ greatly across southern Africa.

Take another example. Whereas Sadr for the Kweneng district (Chapter 2, this volume) suggests the possibility of a radical and recent transformation from foraging to farming in one specific site, in other places gradual and even seasonal transformation would seem to be the norm. The latter is exemplified, for example, by G//ana of the eastern Central Kalahari Game Reserve, who for more than 120 years, and until very recently, spent the wet season in migrations within overlapping band territories in the reserve, and when necessary the dry season living on the more favorable water resources in Central district, east of the Reserve (Cashdan 1984). In an even more extreme case, some Hai//om live isolated in small groups, hunting small game and gathering mangetti nuts in the dry season, and living a farming lifestyle in the wet season (Widlöck 1999:74–79; 165–170; Barnard and Widlöck 1996:95–98). In this case, they frequently also commit themselves to seasonal labor for Ovambo—rather as in the classic style of Central African hunter-gatherers on the edge of agricultural villages (cf. the chapter by Köhler and Lewis).

POLITICAL RELATIONS AND BUSHMAN IDENTITY

As Kent (Chapter 3, this volume) suggests, there is a tendency in some revisionist writing to assume that hunter-gatherers not only borrowed from other cultures, but even abandoned their own cultures when they interacted with larger politico-economic units. She compares southern African hunter-gatherers in this regard to Efe Pygmies and to African American slaves of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. There can be no doubt that, of these three examples, Bushmen have been the least affected by the dominant forces that have over the last several centuries surrounded them. Kent maintains that changes in the archaeological record of southern African hunter-gatherer sites shows continuity, and not necessarily assimilation, enslavement, or extermination. Alison Brooks's pleas for a recognition of diversity in the archaeological record (Chapter 8, this volume) add further support to this assertion. There is also ample historical evidence that in some areas Bushmen and Bantu-speakers lived in close proximity, yet maintained distinct identities and patterns of living. This was commented upon, for example, on the peripheries of the Okavango Delta by Livingstone (1857:69), Selous (1893:141–143),

Gibbons (1904:202), and Hurwitz (1956). Contact has not necessarily entailed either assimilation or subjugation.

Although the different linguistic and cultural groupings into which Bushmen can be categorized remain pertinent today, they are more and more being drawn as "Bushmen" (or "Basarwa" or "San") into an overarching political economy that includes all citizens. Their place in these national contexts is often structured by their status as Bushmen. To take the example of Botswana, Basarwa have long been stigmatized by their pastoralist neighbors as "people of the bush," seen to be lacking in key attributes—particularly *molao* ("law"/"civilization")—that would give them social standing. In independent Botswana, a country that has prided itself on its rapid economic growth and social change over the last three decades, Basarwa are seen by many of their neighbors as an embarrassment, an inappropriate reminder of a past best forgotten. Their status therefore promotes a form of domination that attempts not to subjugate or enslave them as was common in the nineteenth century, but attempts to acculturate Basarwa into "mainstream" society. Comprehensive attempts are made by the Botswana government to discourage key cultural markers associated with Basarwa, such as hunting and gathering, and encourage Basarwa to adopt the norms and form of a dominant Setswana "culture." Behind this policy lies the assumption that the resultant assimilation will mark an end to the "Basarwa problem."

Derek Heater, a political scientist commenting on European nationalism, has commented that there were six ways in which, as he puts it, "the anomaly of minorities in a nationalist age" (Heater 1990:59) could be handled: toleration, conversion, discrimination, persecution, expulsion, or annihilation. Sadly, all of these have occurred with reference to foraging populations in southern Africa, though certainly annihilation has never been seen as a "solution" in Botswana. Since independence, toleration, and conversion have alternately been practiced in various branches of government, while discrimination has been common in the country at large, if not among bureaucrats. Today, persecution and (internal) expulsion are at least what the world sees when mention is made of Botswana's dealings with Basarwa. We are thinking specifically of the G/wi, G//ana, and others from the Central Kalahari Game Reserve. It is a peculiar irony that this reserve, established in the last few years of colonial rule for the protection of Basarwa, should over the last decade have been the subject of so much effort to exclude them. In terms of land, toleration has increasingly given way to attempts at cultural conversion in what, to Basarwa, is the most blatant possible way—removal and reestablishment in land which is not their own. There is, of course, nothing unique about Botswana here; this is a common way of treating minorities, especially poor minorities perceived as otherwise nonthreatening to the majority and the state.

By classifying populations as "Remote Area Dwellers," for over twenty years the

Botswana government has both denied those classified that way their several and distinct identities (G/wi, Nharo, etc.) and prevented them from forming effective political opposition. Botswana is one of the few African countries that is comparable to the archetypal European nation, with a numerical and culturally dominant majority and both economically advantaged and economically disadvantaged small minorities. In such cases, the crucial factor is whether one perceives one's primary identity as ethnic or national. The result of these differing perspectives of identity is a diametrically opposite understanding of the state, either as a protector of shared values of the larger society or as a usurper of such values (of the indigenous minorities).

As early as 1986, it was predicted that the ethnic identity of Bushmen, both as members of a collective category of "Bushman" and members of specific Bushman groups, would increase rather than decrease along with their incorporation into wider social structures (Barnard 1988:24). This prediction, especially with regard to collective Bushman identity, is gradually proving correct. What could not have been predicted is that that is equally true of the even wider category "Khoisan." This hitherto exogenous, anthropologists' label has become a mark of identity for people classified by governments and by themselves as members of several distinct groups, or even as members of no distinct cultural group at all.

DIVERSITY AND ADAPTATION

A prominent characteristic of Bushman cultures is adaptation, both to the natural environment and to changing social conditions. The latter form of adaptation is not as different from the former as it may at first appear. Foraging, as a subsistence technique, is by its very nature an adaptive process. Bushmen, like anyone else, change subsistence strategies to suit available resources. These changes can be relatively permanent, as when groups permanently migrate, or relatively temporary, for example because of seasonal or other short-term changes in the availability of resources. Adaptations to social changes can also be relatively permanent, or more commonly, at least until very recently, temporary ones. Seasonal labor and even long-term clientship of Bushmen among agropastoral peoples are common examples. These do not preclude the return to hunting and gathering, or necessarily destroy their social fabric, although the pressures for permanent change have been very strong indeed since the late 1970s when severe drought for nearly two decades threatened livelihoods throughout southern Africa. Coupled with increasing legal restrictions on hunting, this left an entire generation without the ability to gather wild food, as they had learned to depend on other sources and had neither the necessity nor the inclination to rely on the wild plants their parents and grandparents had lived on.

The most recent developments suggest that politics, rather than assimilation, will be the way forward. For example, the 1999/2000 report of the Working Group for

Indigenous Minorities in Southern Africa (WIMSA; 2000:23-25, 43) contains a list of 20 member organizations. Nine of these organizations are in Namibia, nine in Botswana, and two in South Africa. These organizations report on a number of issues, but two stand out as being overwhelmingly problematic: land and leadership (WIMSA 2000:15-17). There was some good news. The South African government had decided to recognize the \ne Khomani claim to their ancestral land in the Kalahari Gemsbok National Park. The same government had also purchased land for the exiled !Xú and Khoe communities living near Kimberley since 1990. The Namibian government had finally granted rights to land, under Namibia's Community Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) program, in the Nyae Nyae area. There was also bad news. The representative of First People of the Kalahari reported a negative attitude on the part of Botswana government officials on plans to map traditional areas of the Central Kalahari Game Reserve. The East Hanahai Naro (Nharo) representative reported on the desperate need for land to be restocked with game in order to reclaim the possibility of hunting. On leadership, details were not as forthcoming, but the long-standing squabbles within communities over financial matters and leaders' roles in them seemed to be continuing.

Taylor's recent research (Taylor 2000), alongside similar research by Twyman (1998) and Sullivan (1999), has indicated that struggles for land and resource rights by Bushmen are set to be increasingly conducted within the framework afforded by CBNRM programs. Initiated throughout southern Africa in the 1990s, these programs are aimed at enabling residents of rural areas to have a greater degree of management control over the natural resources in their vicinity. Although the extent to which management is actually decentralized is often decidedly limited in practice, CBNRM programs have provided a forum in which, for the first time in many places, debate on land rights is opened up on the local level between residents and government officials. Despite comprising a very small minority of southern Africa's overall populations, the fact that Bushmen generally live in remote areas means that they have a disproportionately high representation in such programs.

The importance of the nascent CBNRM programs, however, lies not only in the opportunity it presents to address resource rights. As participation requires the formation of local Community-Based Organizations, it encourages political organization on the local level, which then can become a channel for motivating for a broad range of political rights from the government. CBNRM also provides the opportunity for Bushmen to use their knowledge and local resources to engage in economic activities, particularly tourism enterprises—an issue that has aroused the interest of several commentators (e.g., Hitchcock 1997; \ne Oma and Thoma 1998; Guenther, in press). Undertaken on their own terms, involvement in tourism can provide an opportunity for not only financial reward, but also increased visibility and the expression and reformulation of history and identity in public arenas.

Ironically, far from marking the end of Bushman culture, the adaptation to new forms of economic activity could help some groups of Bushmen to compete against the pressures placed on them by drought, population expansion, and the encroachment of other groups. It is difficult to escape the reality that Bushmen will not always be pure hunter-gatherers. The survival of their cultures has, for thousands of years, depended on their ability to adapt, and the current trends toward livestock rearing and more intense involvement in economic activities are perhaps best seen in this light. The tragedy is that the current pressures on Bushman groups are much more serious than ever before, giving an urgency, as never before, that research with Bushmen must be oriented toward addressing these issues.

CONCLUSION

Marlowe (Chapter 10, this volume) makes an interesting point when he asks whether foragers cease to be "true foragers" when they have contact with nonforagers. As he suggests, some writers seem to think this is the case, in spite of evidence to the contrary. For example, among the Hadza and northern Khoe, long and extensive contact with outsiders has not affected the ability of such populations to keep a foraging ethos and lifestyle. Marlowe criticizes those on the revisionist side of the Kalahari debate, but it seems to us that both sides could be equally to blame. Anthropologists generally seem to expect a greater degree of cultural "purity" among foragers or hunter-gatherers than they do among other populations (see Barnard 1989). It is as if exposure to a nonforaging lifestyle should inevitably lead to cultural corruption and social instability.

Of course, this is not the case—as many of the chapters in this book show. Rather, what leads to social instability is the domination of outside forces, whether these be from the natural environment, from governments or nongovernmental organizations, traditional political authorities or military organizations, or more particularly from population groups whose lifestyle infringes on that of foragers or former foragers. It is not contact which is relevant or even tragic; it is domination. Domination and subjugation come in different degrees, and have diverse affects when coupled with other factors such as the availability of water, of shops, or wage labor. Only by recognizing the complexity of the issue can we hope either to make new contributions to the now old "Kalahari debate" or to be of relevance to those former foragers caught up by these dominating forces.

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Why the Hadza Are Still Hunter-Gatherers

Frank Marlowe

For several years there has been a heated disagreement over the status of foragers in southern Africa, what has come to be called the Kalahari debate. One side argues that when first studied, the Ju/'hoansi (Dobe !Kung, or !Kung San) approximated pristine foragers, "on the threshold of the Neolithic" (Lee 1972:352). The other side argues they were (along with other San speakers), dominated, ensnared, or enslaved by their Bantu pastoralist neighbors, possibly even ex-pastoralists themselves, forced into foraging because they had lost their herds (Wilmsen 1989). Much of the debate turns on the issue of contact between the Ju/'hoansi and nonforagers (Wilmsen 1989; Wilmsen 1993; Wilmsen and Denbow 1990; Lee and Guenther 1995). From the perspective of the Hadza (also called Hadzabe, Hadzapi, Hadsa, Tindiga, Watindiga, Kindiga, Kangeju, Western Hadza: Wahi), a foraging society in East Africa with whom I work, this concern with contact seems exaggerated. That is because the Hadza have had contact with nonforagers at least for the past century and yet they have persisted as foragers, in many respects I will argue, little changed. By examining the case of the Hadza, I hope to shed some light on the broader issues at stake in the Kalahari debate.

