DOBE !KUNG BUSHMAN

Anthropologist: Richard Lee (fieldwork 1963 - to present)

Hunting & Gathering ancient lifestyle

but all H & G today have been in contact with nonforagers for a very long time

THE PEOPLE

!Kung live in Angola, Namibia, Botswana -
the Dobe area of Kalihari Desert

It's dry!! Only 10 water holes

• Low Impact
  1 person per 8 square miles

• Why?
  Drought danger/local pop

ENVIRONMENT and SETTLEMENT

Basic unit: individual families (move together)
move with the seasons

hunting camps - move every 2-3 weeks (no huts)
• wet season disperse (try for max dispersal to not compete)
• dry season cluster around permanent water-villages

SUBSISTENCE

work 20 hrs per week per adult: "original affluent society"
eat mostly vegetables (70%), not meat (30%)

• GATHERING
  camp, then eat their way out:
  first week-1 mile radius, 2 mile the second etc.
  max 6 1/2 miles-13 mi total
  longer they stay the farther they must walk

young people walk farther collect most desirable
old stay closer collect less desirable - SHARE at end of day

• HUNTING
  meat-> feasting - distribution important
  hunters modest, custom of "insulting the meat"

better hunters not become arrogant so no prestige for being good

• EGALITARIAN - how? trade arrows/share ownership (give away) of meat

men do 20% of gathering, all the hunting, hunting chancy 1 in 4 days kill
women do 80% of the gathering - always get food

total food getting: men 45% to women 55%

SHARING makes way of life possible

KINSHIP and SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

1) TRADITIONAL
  • camps - 10-30 individuals - fluid-relatives, friends, in-laws
    central organizing principle: KINSHIP
    kin terms for everyone (including anthropologists)
  • villages - 20-50 people perm water source (dry season))
    villages organized around a waterhole - the core "owns"
    - bilateral & choose where live, adjust by food availability and conflict

2) CONTACT
  • client groups - attached to Bantu cattle posts
    depend on cattle herders for milk, meat and grain
KINSHIP - Eskimo type BUT with a twist
2 kinds of people: Joking Kin and Avoidance Kin

- Joking: grandparents/grandchildren
  sister/sister  brother/brother
- Avoidance (reserve, respect) FA, MO, SO, DA, sister/brother
  everyone is included by extension - no neutrals
  affines same as consanguines (mo-in-law=avoidance)

- Name Relationships

MARRIAGE and SEXUALITY
parents arrange marriages - NO INCEST - tricky with name relationships
exchange gifts - in-laws & FA-in-law/SO-in-law relationship important
bride service 8-10 years - see if good hunter, not get in a lot of fights
girls can object
girls are 10 to 15 yrs old/ boys 18 to 25
polygamy permitted but rare
often it is an older people whose spouse has died

- MARRIAGE IS ALLIANCE
  Also causes conflict, disharmony and stress

CONFLICT, POLITICS, EXCHANGE
- ownership - groups of people own land and waterhole,
  must ask to use, never refused (kin)
- leadership - no headman - leaders suggest (conflict resolution)
3 levels of conflict:
  1) talking=threats, verbal abuse
  2) fighting= blows/no weapons
  3) deadly fighting= poisoned arrows, spears, clubs
how resolve conflict? split up group
  feuding is a problem
  killing is a problem or a solution
NOW go to Botswana courts
EXCHANGE reduces conflict
  wealthy people asked to share, never accumulate goods
  wealth is lots of friends and kin you trade with
- GENERALIZED RECIPROCITY is the rule
  only have balanced reciprocity with visitors

RELIGION, WORLD VIEW, HEALING
  High god (big, big god) & Lesser god (trickster)
  animal spirits, ghosts, healers (shamans)
  from Bantu got idea of witchcraft

BANTU NEIGHBORS
Herero - cattle herders - thousands of cattle
  have iron, tools, containers, tobacco
1960's isolated foraging

1970's travel to work on mines and farms, some goats and cows- not as mobile
PROBLEM if have herd and someone wants you to share your meat so kill herd-lose
animals, if not kill violate code of sharing
SO 1970's herds not a success

1973 built school, stay in one place 8 months, not enough food to forage
need to make cash so brew beer to sell PROBLEM drunkenness
CASH in system everything changes only a matter of time

1980's gov't dug wells- but only one remained in operation
breakdown of sharing- wealth differences/gender status differences
no longer equal contribution to food so no longer equal status

government relocated Bushmen

NOW Bushman theme park