

## RESEARCH REPORT

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# *Ju/'hoansi Adaptations to a Cash Economy*

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### Introduction

Despite current trends of globalisation, hunting and gathering activities are still widespread in today's world. A large number of human societies in historical times relied nearly exclusively on foraging as a 'mode of production' (Leacock and Lee, 1982; Ingold, 1987), as did vast numbers in prehistory. This reliance on foraging had several important organisational and cultural consequences. The most important of these, according to Leacock and Lee (1982) were:

- collective ownership of the means of production (i.e. the land and its resources),
- the right of reciprocal access to the resources of others through marriage or other social ties,
- little emphasis on accumulation (in fact, an opposition to hoarding of goods),
- generalised reciprocity within the camp,
- equal access to the tools necessary to acquire food,
- and individual ownership of these tools.

In short, these features are representative of a mainly egalitarian society. The Ju/'hoansi<sup>1</sup> of Namibia and Botswana are the most often cited paradigmatic case of this set of features, and of the band societies to which they pertain.

Today, almost all hunter-gatherer groups participate in a necessarily mixed economy, with some engagement in cash transactions (Altman, 1987; Kelly, 1995; Gardner, 1993; Peterson and Masuyama, 1991; Bird-David, 1992a), in particular within the context of Western capitalism. This often proves culturally or socially problematic in terms of the features discussed above. Weber, ([1920] 1958), in his classic study on the origins of capitalism, describes clearly the cultural roots of the accumulation ideology inherent in the capitalist system of Western Europe. He wrote: (Weber ([1920] 1958: p. 53) 'Man [the capitalist] is dominated by the making of money, by acquisition as the ultimate purpose of his life'. This spirit of capitalism is completely antithetical to the egalitarian ethos common to hunter-gatherer societies. Accumulation (of both money and material possessions) is thoroughly discouraged by egalitarian societies, and while cash is certainly sharable, traditional norms for resource

sharing do not equate directly with its handling (Altman, 1987; Altman and Peterson, 1988; J. Peterson, 1984; Endicott, 1988; Wiessner, 1998).

For me, two main questions emerge from these arguments. First, how do modern hunter-gatherers manage to retain their collective identity (of hunter-gatherers) in a mixed economy, now obtaining some resources through means beyond foraging? Second, and more specifically, how do hunter-gatherer societies handle the conflict between the levelling and sharing mechanisms critical to the foraging mode of production (Wiessner 1996), and the ideology of accumulation, wealth, and ambition inherent in a cash economy? This paper will focus on the transition and conflict between traditional hunter-gatherer egalitarianism and the Western capitalist ideology of accumulation.

Since the Ju/'hoansi served as the paradigm in the formation of the model for the foraging mode of production, field study of their adaptation to a cash economy seems especially appropriate.

## **Coping with a Mixed Economy**

### ***Have the Ju/'hoansi Been Hunter-Gatherers?***

In reaction to the Lee and DeVore (1968) model of the foraging mode of production, a number of scholars have argued that neither the Ju/'hoansi nor any historical peoples were, in truth, hunter-gatherers (Wilmsen, 1989; Headland and Reid, 1989; but cf. Lee, 1992). A specific form of this general controversy is referred to as the Kalahari debate, concerning the true nature of the Ju/'hoansi and other Bushman modes of production. Within this debate, there are two separate explanations for the foraging ways among Bushman groups. The first stems from a cultural ecology framework, suggesting that the mode of subsistence is derived from autonomous adaptation to the environment (Lee, 1979; Katz et al., 1997). The second argument proposes that the mode of subsistence is a product of the regional political economy (Wilmsen, 1989; Denbow, 1984; Wilmsen and Denbow, 1990). This is an extremely complicated debate, from which many (e.g., Kent, 1992; Barnard, 1996; Bank, 1998, Section 2) wish to move on, citing Solway and Lee's (1990: p. 110) suggestion that we 'consider the possibility that foragers can be autonomous without being isolated and engaged without being incorporated'. Certainly, that debate bears little meaning or consequence for this paper, since it is not my purpose to show how levelling and sharing mechanisms came to exist. Instead, it is to examine how those mechanisms adapt to a cash economy. On this basis, I move on from the Kalahari debate, concluding that the Ju/'hoansi have been hunter-gatherers.

More to the point is the type of hunter-gatherer society they have been. Much of the general controversy stems from increased awareness of the considerable diversity of hunter-gatherers (Kelly, 1995), leading to the recognition of non-egalitarian as well as egalitarian hunter-gatherers, termed by Woodburn

(1982) delayed-return and immediate-return societies, or by Keeley (1985) complex and simple. Non-egalitarian structures, with distinctions of social distance, utilise a range of modes of reciprocity (Sahlins, 1972). The 'generalised reciprocity' mode is confined to the closest of social circles. 'Balanced reciprocity' is the direct exchange of goods of equal value within a definite and narrow timeframe occurring among more distantly related individuals. Where social distance is even greater, 'negative reciprocity' is a mode oriented entirely toward net utilitarian advantage. Egalitarian structure, on the other hand, depends on mechanisms of sharing and levelling inherent in generalised reciprocity. Egalitarian societies are not those in which everyone is equal, or in which everyone has equal amounts of material goods, but those in which everyone has equal access to food, to the technology needed to acquire resources, and to the paths leading to prestige. In fact, there is always a tendency for some individuals to attempt to lord it over others. In response, egalitarian hunter-gatherers have developed a variety of ways to level individuals – to 'cool their hearts' as the Ju/'hoansi say. The act of sharing is often valued as much, if not more than what actually is shared (Bird-David 1992b; Myers 1988), and is important in maintaining an egalitarian social order (Gardner 1991; Kent 1993), or at least the appearance of an egalitarian order. The failure to share among many hunter-gatherers, in fact, results in ill feeling partly because one party fails to obtain food or gifts, but also because the failure to share sends a strong symbolic message to those left out of the division.

However, acts of sharing among foragers are often preceded by one person's insistence that another share with him or her. This 'demand sharing' is common among hunter-gatherers (Altman and Peterson 1988; Peterson 1993). Once someone gives a gift, he or she has the right to make demands, to ask for particular things in return. (Kelly, 1995: pp. 296, 164-165) Demand sharing clearly makes accumulation difficult. (N. Peterson, 1993: p. 867) In just these ways, the Ju/'hoansi traditionally have relied on food sharing and several other forms of generalised reciprocity to maintain an egalitarian structure (Marshall, 1976; Lee, 1979). In antiquity, when a large animal was killed, people from other families with little or no relationship with the person who made the kill were invited to come and eat the meat because there would be far too much for one family to consume. This was important because it provided a measure of insurance, since even the best hunters could not kill consistently enough to sustain their family without accepting the invitation to eat another family's excess meat (Wiessner, 1982; Cashden, 1990).

Another mode of access to remote resources was through an extensive network of gift-giving relationships. This perhaps centuries-old practice (Wiessner, 1994; Smith and Lee, 1997) was referred to as *xaro*. Wiessner characterises the *xaro* relationship as follows:

The [*xaro*] relationship involves a balanced, delayed exchange of gifts, whose continuous flow gives both partners information about the underlying status of the relationship – one

of a bond of friendship accompanied by mutual reciprocity and access to resources. In addition, each partnership links a person to a broad network of [*xaro*] paths. (Wiessner, 1982: p. 66)

Historically, then, the Ju/'hoansi were not only hunter-gatherers, but of the egalitarian type.

### ***Do the Ju/'hoansi Maintain a Hunter-Gatherer Identity Today?***

The Ju/'hoansi are a member of the diverse group of peoples often referred to as Khoisan. The Ju/'hoansi are the largest of the central !Kung speaking peoples, as distinct from Khoi and other non-Khoi speakers in Namibia (Barnard, 1992). They are situated on the Kalahari rim along the North-Eastern border of Namibia with Botswana. Under the Odendaal Commission of the Apartheid government, Bushmanland was recognised in 1970 and parts of it later set aside as a homeland. In this process, one third of Bushmanland was turned into the Kaudom National Park, and one third set aside for Herero herders. The Ju/'hoansi population of the former Bushmanland stands currently around 1,500, with comparable numbers across the border in Botswana. In the mid-1970s the border between Namibia and Botswana was restricted; in more recent times the border has been enforced, seriously restricting the mobility of Ju/'hoansi groups.

Starting in 1970, the Ju/'hoansi began to be resettled in the town of Tsumkwe and various border posts. The most sweeping changes to the structure of the local economy came with the occupation of the South African Defense Force (SADF) in 1978 (Uys, 1993; Sharp and Douglas, 1996). Though warfare had little direct effect on the Ju/'hoansi, the presence of the SADF had numerous consequences (Lee and Ulrich, 1982; Marshall and Ritchie, 1984). Many who settled took the relatively well paying jobs offered by the SADF. In addition to making the Ju/'hoansi groups more sedentary, it also introduced them to the nature of a cash economy. When the SADF pulled out in 1988, many Ju/'hoansi left their places in the towns and returned to the bush. This process was facilitated by the drilling of bore-holes at the locations of traditional villages by John Marshall and Claire Ritchie. However, at this point, the Namibian Ju/'hoansi ceased to be truly mobile groups, becoming mostly sedentary, settling around the bore-holes that provided permanent access to water. In many ways, hunting and gathering as a mode of production declined significantly, given the over-exploitation of resources around the permanent camps. Thus, the Ju/'hoansi stopped being true foragers and became what Lewis Binford (1980) calls 'collectors' or Taylor (1964) calls 'tethered foragers'.

At present, the Ju/'hoansi have a very mixed economy (Botelle and Rohde, 1995). Polly Wiessner reports that from 1996 to 1998 the Ju/'hoansi at the Xamsa village obtained (averaged over all seasonal foci of exploitation) 18% of their daily calories from hunting, 8% from gathering, 1% from gardening, 35% from store bought goods, and 38% from government rations (Wiessner,

1998). It is also important to emphasise the role of meat as both nutritionally and culturally important to the Ju/'hoansi (Bieseke, 1993). So while a majority of calories come from a modern economy, the all-important meat is not available through purchase; hence, hunting and gathering still play a vital role in the Ju/'hoansi diet. In addition, survey research shows that the Ju/'hoansi still hunt and gather very regularly and almost all are familiar with local resources, even if they get food through other sources (Botelle and Rohde, 1995).

This is similar to many hunter-gatherer groups elsewhere today. Kelly (1995) and Bird-David (1992a) examine in detail the ways in which hunter-gatherer economies adapt to modern situations. They identify the main features of the modern hunter-gatherer mode of subsistence<sup>2</sup> as a continued use of hunting and gathering as a source of food, a generalised knowledge of hunting and gathering techniques, and a flexibility in economic practices with respect to hunting and gathering. In other words, modern hunter-gatherers still hunt and gather regularly or they have a relationship with someone that does, almost all know how to hunt and gather, and they are prepared to survive in the absence of certain sources of food. Clearly, the Ju/'hoansi very much meet the criteria put forward by these researchers in defining a modern hunter-gatherer group, both economically and culturally.

More important than the fact that they do still hunt and gather are social and even cosmological reasons for hunting and gathering (Povinelli, 1992; Bird-David, 1990). As Ingold (1988) points out, people hunt and gather not just to eat, but to maintain the order of social relations emphasising egalitarianism and collective appropriation of resources. Modern hunter-gatherers have economies with social systems designed to incorporate non-hunter-gatherer resources while maintaining a foraging way of life (Bird-David, 1992a, 1992b). Among the Ju/'hoansi, many traits related to the foraging lifestyle are still very prominent.

The egalitarian levelling and sharing mechanisms still play an important role, predominantly in the traditional forms of gift-giving and food sharing, but also taking some new forms in modern life: for example demand sharing of cash and of alcohol (Wiessner, 1998). For the purpose of this paper, whether the Ju/'hoansi are still economically hunter-gatherers, it is crucial to recognise that they still retain egalitarian sharing and levelling mechanisms.

At present, these mechanisms still exist in roughly their traditional forms and also take some new forms that adapt to the mixed economy and the presence of cash. Despite a narrowing of *xaro* networks today, 'gift exchange remains important for maintaining Ju/'hoan society... 50% of the average person's possessions were obtained as *xaro* gifts, forging ties between people of different villages' (Wiessner, 1998: p. 27). Wiessner (1998) also reports that at Xamsa between 1996 and 1998 that 66% of meals eaten involved food sharing of some sort. Obviously, despite the presence of wage labour and government aid, food sharing still plays a very important role in Ju/'hoansi society. Like-

wise, sharing practices now exist to deal with the presence of cash itself. As an informant explained, if a person gets a sum of money, he will be pestered by all of his neighbours until he gives it all away. This modern practice of demand sharing is called *n!oan n/a*. This is very similar to the asking for money by people in the store. Certainly, if one goes to a store to buy goods, that implies that he has money and makes him eligible to be pestered by the people there.

This action of asking for money at the store is referred to as *g-aq'ara*. Alcohol is also a good that is shared commonly at present (Wiessner, 1998). In societies of this type, alcohol provides a way for a person with money to share his resources while still enjoying the cash and symbolically partaking in the experience of sharing (J. Peterson, 1984).

### **Coping with Cash**

My own fieldwork, conducted in 1998,<sup>3</sup> addressed the second of my two initial research questions, namely, how the Ju/'hoansi cope with tensions brought about by immersion in a cash economy. Of the tensions I will examine, the first is the contradiction between the egalitarian norms and leveling practices of the Ju/'hoansi and the personal ambition understood in Western capitalism. Next, there is the tension between the Ju/'hoansi sharing mechanisms and the capitalist accumulation ideology. Last, there is the tension between the traditionally unstipulated exchanges inherent in the generalised reciprocity practices of the hunter-gatherer and the stipulated exchanges of Western capitalism. It is true that the Ju/'hoansi have been exchanging items with non-Ju/'hoansi in a barter system for hundreds of years, however stipulated exchange among the Ju/'hoansi themselves has been rare until very recently.

The fieldwork focused on the Namibian town of Tsumkwe (population about 560), which serves as administrative centre for the thirty or more villages in the very sparsely populated Nyae Nyae area of Eastern Bushmanland, on the western rim of the Kalahari.

The cash economy came to the Namibian Ju/'hoansi in the 1960's, with the establishment of the first store in Tsumkwe, and enlarged dramatically with the arrival of the SADF during the Namibian war for independence. Despite their sudden involvement in a cash economy three decades ago – slowed drastically by their redispersal and by the departure of the SADF – the Ju/'hoansi, like other modern hunter-gatherers (Bird-David, 1992a: p. 30), 'did not settle for good into a new mode of subsistence, but instead incorporated [cash] into their own'.

Cash comes to the Ju/'hoansi in three ways. First, many women and a few men are able to sell small quantities of craft items to respectable marketing operations or the occasional tourist. Second, and more significantly, there are a few jobs for Ju/'hoansi, with state agencies or NGO projects. Finally, and by far most importantly, many of the elderly Ju/'hoansi are eligible for the old-age pension paid out by the Namibian government.

The unequal access to money (to people eligible for old age pension, or the rare Ju/'hoansi able to hold a job), has for the first time given rise to proto-class differences (Botelle and Rhode, 1995), and the exaggeration of social inequality. This result of the cash economy is a significant challenge to the egalitarian ideology and social structure of the Ju/'hoansi tradition. Here is the first of the three tensions introduced above.

Given that there are, through these three means, fair numbers of people with money but little experience or ability in handling it, large numbers of other Namibians (mostly of Bantu ethnicities) have come to Tsumkwe to take advantage of that situation. In fact, these other peoples (Kavangos, Capravis, Hereros, Owambos, Damara) actually outnumber the Ju/'hoansi in Tsumkwe.

Within the former Bushmanland, Ju/'hoansi can spend their money in only a few places. Services in town consist of the school and the health clinic. Goods are available in town through the two legal stores, selling a wide variety of goods, and numerous illegal establishments that sell traditional beer or cheap liquor. Because spending proved to be far more localised than the acquisition of monies, my study of Ju/'hoansi adaptations to the cash economy focused on spending practices, mainly within the two legal sources of commercial goods. In Tsumkwe, most people go to the store nearly every day, and many often spend half of their day in and around the stores. In many ways, these stores provided an ideal social situation in which to observe social relations as well as spending practices of Ju/'hoansi struggling with the cultural dictates of a cash economy. I thus concentrated my direct observation of my subject of interest in and around Tsumkwe's two stores. My principal lens for viewing those social relations and spending practices was Sahlins's (1972) typology of modes of reciprocity – the continuum of generalised, balanced, and negative reciprocity.

## Methods

Of the two stores in town, the Tsumkwe Winkel was more difficult for me to stay in for long periods of time. It was not an acceptable behaviour to loiter in the Winkel for an extended period, which made observation inside the actual store very difficult. There was no place for me to sit inside so that, usually, I was forced to sit outside the store near the doorway. I could see into the store fairly well from that point, but it limited my observation.

It took me a good deal of time to become accepted as an everyday person at the Tsumkwe Winkel. The first time I went into the store, everyone in it went silent. Even as time progressed, the behaviour of people in the store changed dramatically when I entered. This also presented a problem for observing natural behaviour, one that I never entirely overcame. In many ways, my observation was limited to other types of information in the store, such as what sort of people were there, where people positioned themselves, as well as physical behaviour.

Observation was much easier in the Tsumkwe Self-Help Shop, where loitering was not only acceptable but actually encouraged by the presence of tables where people could sit to watch videotapes. Thus, it was very acceptable for me to be in the store, and to stay there for extended periods of time. After a time, I became friends with the clerks in the store.

Informant interviewing was an important source of information about the two stores and about Ju/'hoansi spending practices. Key informants were all current or former store personnel of one sort or another, and were drawn from several different ethnic groups. All key informants spoke enough English that interviews could be conducted in that language.

Respondent interviewing took the form of twenty-four survey interviews of Ju/'hoansi who frequently patronised the two stores, conducted for me, in Ju/'hoan language, by an experienced interpreter.

### **The Tsumkwe Winkel**

Soon after the designation of Tsumkwe as an administrative centre in late 1959, the first store was opened, catering as much for the needs of the white administrative personnel as for the Ju/'hoansi. The language of administration and commerce during the South African trusteeship was, of course, Afrikaans, and the store was accordingly named the Tsumkwe Winkel. From its early days, but especially during the war for independence, the Winkel came under criticism for its business ethics.

The current owner, an outsider from the metropole, operated the Winkel as part of a three-store chain within the Tsumkwe district. This economy of scale made possible lower prices on many if not most goods, yet the current owner too was widely criticised regarding his business ethics. Profit was the owner's explicit (and understandable) goal, and the Winkel was run along very business-like lines. Physically too, the Winkel differed rather sharply from the layout principles of Ju/'hoan tradition, in that its small front yard was closed off from the dusty street by wire fencing. It was situated convenient to key administrative facilities, i.e., across the street from the police station on one side and from the clinic on the front. Inside the store, there were counters in front of the north, west, and south walls, separating customers from goods. There was no cash register, but the money box was on the west wall near the centre. The cool drinks and beer were in a refrigerator on the south wall, which was otherwise pretty bare. Food staples (flour, and soup and the like) was on shelves on the west wall, while the snack items (candy and chips) were on the north wall. The walls were plastered with ads for Mountain Dew and Pepsi, which were not actually sold in the store. Ads for maize meal featuring a soccer player hung on a string from the ceiling.

The two female clerks of the Winkel were Hereros, although one was said to have some Bushman ancestry and to partially understand but not speak Ju/'hoansi. These clerks could converse very minimally in English, but Afri-



kaans retained its standing as the preferred language of commerce in the Winkel. Though few speak English, many of the Ju/'hoansi can converse in Afrikaans and even Herero, a people with whom the Ju/'hoansi have been in contact with for several centuries. What is interesting is that the Ju/'hoansi refuse to communicate verbally with the employees of the Winkel, often feigning ignorance of these languages. This clearly shows the extent to which the Ju/'hoansi are uncomfortable in the Tsumkwe Winkel and around its non-Ju/'hoansi management and patronage, and demonstrates the tension between these ethnic groups. Also interesting, people do not ask others for money in the Tsumkwe Winkel. Not once in the dozens of times I was in this store did a person ask me for money. The managers of the shop seemed to discourage this behaviour. Furthermore, vendors were not allowed to stand in front of the shop to sell their items. These are ideas that are not uncommon in commercial culture, as shops will often scare off people begging for money or selling small items from their property.

The Winkel did extend credit to Ju/'hoansi with regular sources of income, even though Ju/'hoansi understandings of that concept often seemed quite vague. Payment of accumulated debts was a major source of friction, as the Winkel was very strict about getting back money that they had given out on credit. As a first step, the Winkel would post on the wall a sheet of cardboard listing, in Afrikaans, those Ju/'hoansi who owed money to the store, with the amount written next to the name. Subsequently, delinquent Ju/'hoansi debtors would be visited by quite intimidating debt collectors, some of dubious ethics.

I talked with [a government official] and he told me that several Kavangos from the South store (Winkel) had come in his office to ambush his Bushman workers with the idea of collecting on their debts. He went on to tell how he had taken his workers down to the North store (Self-Help) to cash their pay checks of N\$300 and these thugs had found them there and had taken the whole N\$300 despite the fact that the debt was only about N\$40. He explained that selling booze on credit is illegal, and so his workers would not have to pay the debt at all. [This official] refers to the people at that store as the 'local mafia'. (Field notes)

Despite widespread public drunkenness in Tsumkwe, particularly on weekends, I observed only very rarely intoxicated people on the premises of the Winkel during normal business hours. I believe this relative absence to have been due to the rules of the store. It seemed clear that the management that such behaviour would discourage business from coming to the store. Similarly, during daytime hours, I never once observed a fight on the property of the Winkel, which too would be seen as be bad for business. On a very few occasions (only on Saturdays), I witnessed Herero clerks, with music playing, dancing in the Winkel. This was one of the few activities that did not involve the sale of goods. Occasionally, at other points, the tape-player would be on very quietly in the store. This was certainly unusual and restrained, and never did the Ju/'hoansi partake in the entertainment at the Tsumkwe Winkel.

Observationally, then, it was clear to me that most Ju/'hoansi do not feel comfortable in the Winkel. I noted on several occasions how little time the Ju/'hoansi spent there, and how uncomfortable they seemed, as often their actions were restricted by the cultural incompatibility of the Winkel's expectations. In fact, other ethnic groups in Tsumkwe were observed to patronise the Winkel in greater numbers than the Ju/'hoansi, arguably because these other groups are more experienced in the ways of the cash economy. That situation seemed quite acceptable to the Winkel clerks; in interviews, both clerks were quick to admit that the bulk of their receipts derive from non-Ju/'hoansi customers.

### **The Tsumkwe Self-Help Shop**

The second store has been in existence since 1993, and is owned by an Afrikaner native to Tsumkwe, who operates it as a sideline to his primary business, the town's tourist lodge. He explained in an interview that he opened the store because the Ju/'hoansi asked him to do so. He had been bringing in supplies for his workers at the lodge, and had allowed the town's people to buy what his workers did not want. The existing store did not carry many of these items, and its staff did not speak the Ju/'hoansi language, as did this man's workers. Therefore, they asked him to open his own store – the Tsumkwe Self-Help Shop – to accomplish these goals. The store sold petrol, as well, for a time; the now-empty pumps are still present, alongside a large petrol tank behind store. Physically, the Self-Help Shop is located at the crossroads of the main north-south avenue of Tsumkwe and the east-west road to the nearest large settlement (Grootfontein, 304km to the west). This location is a mere 200 meters north of the Winkel, and is also very near the town's bottle store and several shebeens. The Self-Help Shop's ample front yard was completely unfenced, containing several trees and two signs advertising the lodge and the store.

Inside the shop, the counter extended in front of only the south and west walls. The packaged soups were on the west wall, along with other canned goods, solid food items, and clothing. The cool drinks and beer were in a refrigerator on the south wall. Bread and flour were usually on the bottom shelf of that wall, while candy, sugar, and potato chips were on the higher shelves. There were chocolate bars in the refrigerator, and hard candy on the counter in front of the cool drinks. The walls were all plastered with boxing posters advertising beer.

The cash register was located on the south counter. As mentioned, there was a television monitor, VCR, and audio tape-player on the west wall. Since no radio or TV signals reach Tsumkwe during daylight hours, the Self-Help Shop also provided video and audio tapes for the VCR and tape-player. There were four picnic tables in the store, usually oriented toward the television monitor. There were often times, especially in the afternoon, when many people concentrated around the television monitor watching a video-taped movie. In fact, it

was a great source of pride to the Ju/'hoansi that 'their' store had a VCR and the Winkel did not.

In the Self-Help store, Ju/'hoansi always outnumbered other ethnic groups, although there were usually several non-Ju/'hoansi there at any given moment. The two male clerks were Ju/'hoansi who could speak fairly basic Afrikaans and English. In this store, it was clear that the Ju/'hoansi customers were both linguistically and culturally compatible with the clerks. I noted nearly every time I was there that people spent long stretches of time in the store, and not only when the television monitor was playing. In addition, the Ju/'hoansi spoke louder and acted much more freely. It is also my opinion that the behaviour of the Ju/'hoansi was much more natural in the Self-Help store, as they were usually surrounded by people of the same culture.

People would often ask for money, both standing outside the shop and actually inside the shop. The staff did not discourage this behaviour at all. In addition, at most hours of the day, there were many women selling curios in the shade in front of the shop. This was even expected behaviour at the store.

The Self-Help had similar policies about credit extension but very different policies about debt collection from those of the Tsumkwe Winkel. The Self-Help store collected in more friendly ways, as an informant who was a former employee explained: 'At [Self-Help], they give out invoices to people who owe them money before the end of the month. That is as much as they do.' There was no list of debtors and debts posted at the Self-Help store, and no debt collectors sent out. Furthermore, at a point when the pension money that is supposed to be paid to the Ju/'hoansi elderly did not come through for three months, the store gave out credit to everyone, basically meaning that they gave out food to everyone. By the owner's account, the store lost N\$12,000 giving out food, which they were unable to collect.

At Self-Help store, at nearly any hour of any day, one could observe drunken behaviour around the shop. Even inside, one could often observe numerous intoxicated people. One inferred that the Ju/'hoansi felt comfortable enough in the Self-Help to allow themselves to get drunk and to act in unruly inebriated manners. Though fighting was overtly forbidden in the shop, I observed several fights in the yard. Predictably, most of the participants were drunk. For instance, I observed the following encounter. Outside, there was a man passed out on the ground with two men and a young woman standing around him. They all appeared drunk. At one point, the one man started twisting the woman's arm. Soon, she dropped his green hat and he put it on. He then threatened the other man standing next to him. After a while, he chased the woman down and repeated his abuse. The woman did not seem to be too upset by this. In fact, she was smiling the whole time. After a while, the woman went over to one of the girls under an adjacent tree and did her best in her condition to be violent toward her. She swung and missed by a lot. The girl thought that she was playing, but when she realised that the woman was serious she backed away in anger.

However, the participants were not always drunk. One fight that I observed, though not very serious, involved two children throwing rocks at each other. Another went as follows. When I pulled up, there was a fight out front. Two men, one with a strange buzz hair cut, the other wearing South African flag pants were on the ground wrestling. Soon, some women worked their way between the two and separated them. Then they both wandered off with the women holding them back the whole time.

When the participants of a fight were drunk, there was no effort made to stop it by people around the shop. When the people fighting were sober, there were several people along to break up the fight quickly.

There are no broadcast signals that reach Tsumkwe during daylight hours, as mentioned before. In addition, there is obviously no movie theatre (In fact, to my knowledge, there is no theatre within 800 km of Tsumkwe.) The Self-Help shop often played videotapes on the VCR, movies such as 'RoboCop', 'Sarafina', and, fittingly, both 'The Gods Must Be Crazy' films (South African movies featuring Bushmen characters and terrain. These movies were always well attended. There were often thirty people, sometimes as many as forty. (On Saturdays, the owner tried to get his clerks to keep the store open longer and show a movie later, with the purpose of trying to keep people off the streets.) The movies were always enjoyed.

For instance, I observed the following occasion. I heard that 'The Gods Must Be Crazy II' was on in the shop at about 10am, so I went down to the North store as quickly as I could. There were about 25 people in the store, of which a majority were women with babies. The movie was the clear reason why everyone was in the store, as this movie is perhaps one of the only movies with a familiar person as well as familiar locations. Everyone, race regardless, found the movie hilarious.

In addition, when the television monitor was not on, the store would turn the tape-player on. The store did these things without intending to generate business from them. The shop was the only public place in the town where such forms of entertainment could be observed. In fact, it was the only place in town to observe any Western media.

In addition to the entertainment, the Self-Help shop would often keep a pitcher of cold water in the freezer, and would give out to good customers glasses of water at no charge in a small styrofoam cup (any customer could use the outdoor tap). This was a very valuable service given the hot and dry environment, and would be even more important in the summer.

I also observed the Self-Help shop performing 'banking services' in limited ways. This was very valuable service to the community since there is no bank within 300 km of Tsumkwe. On occasions when small bills were not available to make change for external transactions, the store would quickly oblige and make change. In addition, when Ju/'hoansi in town or from nearby villages came into more money than they could spend at one time, the store would put

the excess money in little plastic sacks with the name of the owner and the amount of money within. This allowed the owner of the money to travel without carrying large sums of money. Also, if a Ju/'hoan person did have money with him, there would be the expectation that he would give it away to his friends. The Self-Help's attempt at 'banking' thus saved people a great deal of difficulty.

### **Survey Results**

Vital to this entire line of analysis was my observational finding that Ju/'hoansi customers were more comfortable in the Self-Help Shop than in the Winkel. Might I have been mistaken? When asked that question, Ju/'hoansi informants felt very strongly that nearly all Ju/'hoansi feel more comfortable and at ease in the Self-Help Shop. Taking this one step farther, I supervised the survey of a quota sample of twenty-four adult Ju/'hoansi from Tsumkwe, excluding children and extremely elderly people. The survey asked two questions: Which store do you go to more frequently? and What reason do you have for going to each store? I had hypothesised that more respondents would prefer the Self-Help Shop, and that the reasons for going to the Winkel would be mainly economic in nature while reasons for going to Self-Help would be predominantly non-economic (reflecting cultural compatibility with Ju/'hoan traditions).

Of the twenty-four respondents, fourteen went to the Self-Help more frequently, nine to the Tsumkwe Winkel, and one did not favour either shop. More interesting are the reasons for frequenting the stores, categorised as either economic (One shop sold a certain item cheaper, one shop had an item that the other did not, one shop was closer, the queues were shorter in one shop, et cetera) or non-economic reasons (the clerks of one shop speak or do not speak Ju/'hoansi, communication was easier in one shop, the staff of one shop was more friendly, respectful, kind, understanding, et cetera). Of the fourteen respondents who favoured the Self-Help, five cited economic reasons while nine cited non-economic reasons. Of the nine respondents who favoured the Tsumkwe Winkel, all nine cited economic reasons, and none cited non-economic reasons.

### **Findings and Conclusion**

In its own way, each of the stores represents a different step in the transition toward a capitalist system of reciprocity. In the sort of isolated, small-town setting that defines the situation of the two stores in Tsumkwe, one would expect to find balanced reciprocity, i.e., material interests heavily conditioned by the strong social ties of small town life. Yet, along the continuum from generalised reciprocity (the solidarity extreme) to negative reciprocity (the unsociable extreme), the balance between social ties and material interests does clearly

distinguish (for the Ju/'hoansi) between the two stores. Reciprocity, though having an economic form, is not a purely economic activity.

Sahlins (1972) identifies reciprocity as a three-part system, composed of social, moral, and economic functions. Though the stores serve similar economic functions for the Ju/'hoansi, the social (and moral) functions offered by these stores differ drastically. For the Ju/'hoansi, social ties are a much stronger factor in the Self-Help shop than in the Winkel. This difference is rooted partly in the staff composition of the two stores, with the Self-Help employing Ju/'hoan-speaking staff, and the Tsumkwe Winkel employing entirely non-Ju/'hoan speaking staff. The difference in social ties is also rooted in clientele composition, with the Self-Help clientele (who spend a significant amount of time in the store) being composed of mostly Ju/'hoansi, and that of the Winkel mainly of non-Ju/'hoansi. Both direct observation and the survey results indicate that for these reasons the Ju/'hoansi feel more comfortable in the Self-Help shop, and only for material reasons frequent the Winkel. These differences in social distance affect the strength of social norms in terms of reciprocity practices.

I discussed earlier three main tensions caused by the transition to a cash economy: first, the contradiction between the egalitarian norms of the Ju/'hoansi versus personal advantage understood in Western capitalism; second, the tension between the Ju/'hoansi sharing mechanisms and the capitalist accumulation ideology; third, the tension between the traditionally unstipulated exchanges inherent in the generalised reciprocity practices of the hunter-gatherer and the stipulated exchanges of Western capitalism.

The Tsumkwe Winkel represents the unsociable extreme. It is an impersonal environment where social distance between customer and clerk is at its greatest. It is an environment where all Ju/'hoansi can daily participate in a stipulated exchange, attempting to maximise cash resources in the manner prescribed by nature of the capitalist ideology, free from the social pressure applied by other Ju/'hoansi. No barrier of societal norms stands between the Ju/'hoansi and their bare material interests, allowing them to build experience in capitalist exchange without being pressured by internal values. All this addresses the third tension discussed above.

The Self Help represents a place with little social distance between customer and clerk, and is a place where many traditional cultural practices of the Ju/'hoansi are still observed. Here, the Ju/'hoansi participate in stipulated exchange driven by capitalism with other Ju/'hoansi. While everyone is aware that the clerks are only agents of other outside interests, stipulated exchange is still acted out by two Ju/'hoansi parties. This, too, addresses the third tension discussed above between stipulated and unstipulated exchange. In addition, the Self Help also deals with the second tension described above. Through its private 'banking' system it provides a quiet foundation for the possibility of tem-

porary accumulation of cash. This shows the ways in which the Ju/'hoansi are beginning to accept an accumulation ideology.

This paper has shown how the behaviour of the Ju/'hoansi in the two stores differently represents attempts to deal with tensions between the egalitarian ideology inherent in those sharing and levelling practices and the encroaching capitalist economy. Obviously, the Ju/'hoansi are not the only people to undergo this rapid transition from values of egalitarianism to an environment that encourages the accumulation ideology. This same situation of egalitarianism coming into contact with the modern capitalist economy has been documented around the world. In fact, it seems to explain many of the problems endemic to First Nation groups. From a nomothetic perspective, it is important to understand the dynamics of this transition from egalitarianism to the antithetical values of capitalistic accumulation. Only with this knowledge can the many other complex issues of hunter-gatherer transition to a modern cash economy be understood in context.

## Notes

1. There is little convention with regard to naming the Ju/'hoansi as a people. Formerly, they have been called the !Kung San, or Bushmen. However, these both have been interpreted as having derogatory connotations. I use Ju/'hoansi, which is the term they apply to themselves, and is gaining acceptance in the academic community.
2. Some scholars find the concept of a 'modern hunter-gatherer society' to be anathema, claiming that both traditionally non-foraging and forager societies today participate in basically the same level of hunting and gathering.
3. This paper reflects data collected only in June and July of 1998. Informal observation in subsequent years has shown significant changes in the conditions examined in the original ethnography.

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