Rediscovering Darwin: Evolutionary Theory and Archeological Explanation

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Seeking Guidelines through an Evolutionary Approach: Style Revisited among the !Kung San (Ju/'hoansi) of the 1990s

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ABSTRACT

This paper will seek to situate style as a means of communication in a fundamental human cognitive process identified in social psychology: the establishment of positive personal and social identities via social comparison and the projection of these to others. First, identification by comparison and its link to stylistic communication will be discussed. Second, how this cognitive process came to be in our evolutionary history, and the evolutionary developments through which style might have arisen will be identified. Third, the implications of this process for formulating stylistic questions and guiding analysis will be developed. The focus will be on diachronic rather than synchronic stylistic analysis, namely, on analysis of the changing relations between the individual and society and how history is drawn on selectively in creating or transforming identities. Finally, the utility of the approach will be tested in a follow-up case study of stylistic change in projectile points and beadwork among the !Kung San (Ju/'hoansi) of Botswana and Namibia.

INTRODUCTION

Virtually all known human societies produce variation in material culture that falls with in the general concept of style as 'a way of doing or expressing things', though definitions used in archaeological studies differ. The reciprocal also holds true—not only do most humans engage in stylistic behavior, but observers seek to interpret it. For example, a visitor to a foreign culture who is ignorant of the language may look for stylistic clues to determine how people identify and classify themselves, whether this be by age, sex, or social group. Because of the close association of material culture with the bearer, often as an extension of the body, style tends to be given meaning and become emotionally loaded—it can incite feelings of joy, worth, brother/sisterhood in the bearer and attract, repel, appease, or provoke the observer.

The universality of style in material culture as a means to communicate aspects of identity, the tendency of the receiver to consider that it has such meaning, and its emotional tagging all indicate that style is grounded in human cognition. In the approach taken here, I will seek to situate style as information exchange in the service of a fundamental cognitive process: the establishment of positive personal and social identities via social comparison and the projection of these to others (Wiessner 1984: 191-195). This process, identified by social psychologists, is universally found in human societies and appears to be fundamental to psychological wellbeing (Lemaine 1974; Tajfel 1974, 1978, 1982a, 1982b; Turner 1973). I will depart from other evolutionary approaches in a number of respects. First, natural selection will not be seen as operating directly on material culture, the 'fitness of artifacts', but on the humans and their behaviors that produce style. It is people—not artifacts—who reproduce. Second, although style will be treated as a form of non-verbal communication, it will not be argued that style maximizes efficiency of information transfer, as in Wobst's formulation (1977). Style is chosen for effectiveness within a given cultural context, sometimes
involving costly display. Third, style will not be analyzed within the functional framework of maximizing the reproductive success of its bearers in any single given instance. Rather, following the schools of thought from human ethology (Eibl-Eibesfeldt 1989) and evolutionary psychology (Tooby & Cosmides 1989), cognitive dispositions will be seen as having conferred reproductive advantage when they evolved, and thereafter more often than not in our evolutionary history.

The goal of this paper is to explore the cognitive processes underlying the cultural transmission of style, their role in structuring variation in material culture, and thereby identify relevant questions to guide stylistic analysis. Though there is much of interest and value in the work that has been done on cultural transmission to date (Boyd & Richarson 1985, Neiman 1995), it will be argued that cultural transmission must be understood from the viewpoint of human cognitive processes and not formal models constructed on the basis of 'logical possibilities.' Mathematical models for predicting variation in material culture that require no interpretation may be ideal for a scientific archaeology, as Neiman (1995: 30-31) argues. However, if cognitive processes underlying stylistic behavior involve considerable interpretation and intentionality on the part of the actors, then one can hardly construct viable models of cultural transmission without taking these factors into account.

To look at style within the framework of identification via comparison is not new (see Wiessner 1983, 1984). Here, however, I would like to develop facets of this approach that I have not developed or emphasized in other publications. The first is to make some suggestions as to how and why the cognitive process of identification via comparison came to be in our evolutionary history, and thereby try to identify the evolutionary developments with which style might be most closely linked. The second is to examine the process of identification via comparison in order to derive guidelines for the kinds of questions that can be asked of style in a diachronic perspective. Finally I will try to test the utility of this approach in a follow-up case study of the !Kung San (Ju/'hoansi) 23 years later, after major changes had taken place in subsistence, settlement, and lifestyle. While, in my 1970s research, I could only explore the potential of synchronic stylistic analysis of !Kung artifacts for yielding information on boundaries and interaction, the diachronic perspective that can be taken after a longer term study makes it possible to work with an entirely different range of information contained in style: insights into the changing relations between the individual and society and how history is drawn on selectively in creating or transforming identities.

IDENTIFICATION VIA SOCIAL AND STYLISTIC COMPARISON

A vast literature in social psychology has documented the need of humans to establish self-images or identities with both personal and social components. Personal identity usually denotes specific attributes of the individual such as psychological characteristics, bodily attributes, feelings of competence, ways of relating to others, intellectual concerns, personal tastes, and so on (Geggen 1971). Material culture of the bearer may be an extension of this image. Social identity, according to Tajfel, is "the part of individuals' self concepts which derive from their knowledge of their membership of a social group(s) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership" (1982a: 2). Both social and personal components of identity are crucial to the formation of self images: persons are unable to form identities in the absence of group membership, and conversely, individuals feel uncomfortable in situations of extreme conformity and seek to differentiate themselves on a personal basis (Fromkin 1972, Lemaîne et al. 1978). A sense of personal or social identity may come to the fore in certain situations; social identity is the cognitive mechanism that makes group behavior possible (Turner 1982). Finally, humans not only have a need to establish personal and social identities, but they seek to project these to others in a positive light.

Much evidence has accumulated to demonstrate that the process of identity formation is social comparison, that is, the tendency of humans to evaluate their abilities, opinions, and attributes against those of surrounding others (Festinger 1954). So well established is the identification via comparison that it is assumed by many authors to be a basic cognitive process in humans (Lemaîne 1974; Tajfel 1978, 1982a; Turner 1975). That the contents of identities are to a great extent culturally and historically determined is well-recognized (Wetherell 1982). Identities are created selectively from historical and current considerations, and chosen markers are used to form, maintain or transform corresponding boundaries (Barth 1969).

Style in material culture is one of several important channels by which personal and social self-images can be presented to others to receive recognition. Stylistic choices are made in a process parallel to that of identity formation, through comparison with surrounding others followed by statement of position: for instance, expression of similarity, differentiation, opposition, or complementary. Style is particularly appropriate for transmitting information about identity because: (1) as an extension of the body it can enhance certain attributes; (2) it can present several aspects of identity at one time,
which might influence or modify one another; (3) it can make use of aesthetic experience to reinforce identity representations as well as bonding those who respond to it with pleasure (Eibl-Eibesfeldt 1989); (4) style can be tactful—it communicates without demanding response, leaving others time to formulate their reactions; and (5) style is produced in artifacts that are often durable and replicated from generation to generation. It is thus suitable for conveying information regarding historical associations that bind people in dispersed social networks.

Thoughts on the Evolution of Identification via Comparison and Style

When, where, and how did this cognitive disposition come to be? Since the evolution of identification via comparison does not "fossilize", I can only present some reflections on the processes that might have led humans to "fix" stylistic activities in their behavioural repertoires. It is not difficult to envision selection pressures for the disposition to establish a sense of personal identity via comparison and to project this to others, for instance in mate selection, dominance struggles or, as Crook (1981) has proposed, to attract others in relationships of reciprocal altruism (Trivers 1971). To account for the evolution of social identity is more complex. Need for cooperation in hunting or defense are candidates, although I would propose that a much stronger impetus probably came with the evolution of socially defined kinship systems, that is, the extension of familial relationships to affinal relatives, distant kin, or even non-kin. Spheres of kinship would no longer be delimited in terms of immediate family membership or physical cohabitation, but by networks held "in the mind and heart" composed of kin of varying degrees of relatedness in different locations. Socially defined kinship relations, together with their most important rights and privileges of delayed reciprocal exchange and access to the resources of others, made possible the construction of networks to reduce risk. These were crucial to the expansion and survival of human populations, for they permitted people to redistribute themselves over the social and natural resources of a region according to need. Barton, Clark, and Cohen (1994; Clark, Barton, & Cohen 1996) have pointed out that, prior to the last glaciation, the middle latitudes of the Old World were largely abandoned by human populations, while during the last glacial maximum they were able to remain at densities higher than ever before. Perhaps this can be taken as an indicator of the interval during which socially defined kinship systems might have developed; certainly the flourishing in style and exchange suggests the same (Gamble 1982, 1986). Historical associations may have been chosen as important components of social identity with the evolution of social kinship networks because bonds between members of such dispersed networks are based on periodic association over an extended stretch of time rather than spatial contiguity.

Boehm (1993) has recently called attention to another development that could have greatly facilitated the evolution of "pro-social" or altruistic behaviors critical to maintaining socially defined kinship systems and accompanying obligations for reciprocity, that is, egalitarianism. Unlike most great ape societies, human foraging societies and many simple horticultural societies are strongly egalitarian (Knauff 1991, Wrangham 1987). It is thus likely that egalitarian structures evolved out of hierarchical ones, perhaps out of primate coalitions to rise in dominance hierarchies (De Waal 1982). With egalitarianism, inter-individual competition is greatly reduced and together with it the cost of "altruistic behavior". This is because recipients of altruistic behavior are barred by social rules and sanctions from using goods or assistance received to develop a position from which they can appropriate the resources of others or gain marked advantage in differential reproduction. Certainly in foraging societies today the dynamics of sharing and delayed reciprocal exchange hinge on the fact that what is given cannot be used to dominate or incur debt.

Style would have been an important means of communication to support the expansion of kinship networks and egalitarian relations because it could:

(a) express information about identity and its positive correlates, such competence, strength, or worth, without resorting to overt, aggressive, and confrontational displays that are so characteristic of great ape societies with dominance hierarchies;

(b) provide indicators of similarity that modify physical differences;

(c) help establish homogeneity between individuals in different groups and hence facilitate the expansion of kinship networks;

(d) attract mates from other groups to forge the ties necessary for expanding socially defined kinship networks.

It appears that socially defined kinship systems were first constructed to elicit cooperation within a broader regional population. Only later, in the face of demographic and economic pressure were systems of social kinship elaborated into more pronounced corporate groups such as clans, tribes, and political hierarchies that form the infrastructure for most known pre-state societies. In this process, historical associations that bind people to the land and to each other would have become a much stronger component of social identity and the role of style broadened to support new kinship structures and maintain boundaries between these.
Identification via Comparison and Stylistic Information

If style is situated in process of identification via comparison, what guidelines can knowledge of this cognitive disposition give us for stylistic analysis? First, because the parameters for social and stylistic comparison are culturally defined, before stylistic analysis is undertaken it is essential to take cultural meaning into consideration (see also Hodder 1982, 1986; Shanks & Tilley 1987). This can only be done in the most general terms, for it is difficult to predict how people will attach meaning to form, and there are but a few signals with biological roots whose range of meanings are similar in most societies (e.g., bared teeth, tooth patterns, or phallic display [Bibl-Eibesfeldt & Sutterlin 1992; Uber 1991]). An important first step is to ascertain whether or not a certain artifact or attribute bears culturally significant meaning. That is, once some items of material culture or attributes are given meaning, all have the potential to transmit information or be interpreted as such. Nonetheless, some are loaded and others hold little, a fact that must be reckoned with in analysis of variation in material culture.

For simplicity, I will refer to variation in material culture that is assigned little meaning as 'isochrestic' (Sackett 1982) and that attributed meaning as 'style'. Although there is not a distinct line between the two, and style can lose meaning and isochrestic variation be given meaning), it is possible to use certain criteria to sort artifacts and attributes that are likely to contain social meaning from those that are not. A more obvious one is whether an artifact bears decoration or whether an attribute is decorative. Others include centrality of an artifact in subsistence or social systems making it suitable for stylistic communication; whether variation can be readily perceived with the naked eye; and whether this variation is the product of careful craftsmanship or casual production. Patterns of change through time can also give clues. For example, if social, economic, or political conditions are altered in material culture employed in associated activities remains constant, then it is less likely that these bear personal or social messages. A preliminary sorting of artifacts or attributes into those that appear to have much or little meaning, though not possible in every case, is an important first step, because it determines whether models such as those based on 'drift' should be applied (Neiman 1995) or those centering on social aspects of transmission.

If an attribute or set of attributes is assigned cultural meaning and can be counted as style, then it becomes an means of agency, as individuals and groups manipulate meanings in social strategies. Here I would like to sketch out two sources of information in style that are generated during the process of identification via comparison which can be analyzed to derive information about social agency in a diachronic perspective: (1) the changing relations between the individual and society and (2) the role of historical associations in constructing identities. Although these two points are rarely the goal of stylistic analysis, they hold great potential.

Let us turn to the first. Because people have a need to both form and project positive images of personal and social identity, style can be expected to carry information about the two (expression of individual identity is essentially what Macdonald [1990] has called 'panache', and social identity, 'protocol'). As personal identity is not constructed in a vacuum, but in relation to surrounding others, it expresses not only individual attributes but associations, usually those stemming from close personal relations. As a result, personal stylistic expression can be used as a measure of affiliative interaction. Social identity, by contrast, places the individual within larger social groups, and if these groups are continuous in space, stylistic expression of social identity may yield information on groups and boundaries.

The use of style to delimit boundaries and gauge rates of interaction or affiliation are the most conventional uses of style in archaeology (see Barton, Chapter 8). However, if the personal and social expressions of identity are analyzed in a diachronic perspective and in relation to one another, then style potentially holds information on the changing relations between the individual and society. From such relations it is sometimes possible to make inferences concerning units of social agency which initiated developments. Changes in the proportion of individual and group expression can be derived from the increase or decrease in the amount of stylistic variability through time in any given attribute or set of attributes within an area. That is, if certain styles exhibit innovation and increased variability over time, one might deduce accentuated personal differentiation; conversely, the appearance of homogeneity or standard emblems within a bounded area might suggest pronounced feelings of group solidarity. Furthermore, because certain situations predictably "switch on" expressions of group and personal identity respectively, it is not only possible to show that changes occurred in the proportion of individual to group expression, but to propose potential underlying causes. For example, inter-group competition, aggression, or other conditions that require or impose cooperation draw out expressions of group identity. Opportunities for personal gain, increased inter-individual competition, abundance, or break down in the social order foster individual expression. Such developments can then be further interpreted by other sources of information on politics, economy, or lifestyle.
A second and integral feature of identification via comparison is the role of history in the process of constituting identity. Though identification via comparison is a process found in all humans, the contents of identity are historically and culturally constituted. That is, when people compare themselves to others, whether as individuals or groups, and chose to express affiliation, differentiation, or opposition, track record and other historical associations play a crucial role. Likewise, when identity is communicated stylistically, choice of stylistic decisions are guided by historical meanings. For personal identity, many facets of a self-image may be formed within the person’s life time; for group identity, however, historical associations are fundamental, for it is history and genealogy that bind people to land and either to link them to similar others or separate them from the same. Nonetheless, history does not determine identity. Rather, historical associations and their material expressions are called upon selectively in the process of creating, altering, or transforming identities. Examining which historical markers are evoked in the process of identity formation, by whom, and how they are combined with new elements can thus provide valuable information on the source, nature, and agency of change.

In summary, stylistic transmission operates through the interpretive processes of social and stylistic comparison, taking relationships and meaning from both the present and past to shape identity relations of the future. Models of cultural transmission that do not consider this process are likely to miss the mark. Understanding the cognitive dispositions underlying style gives a theoretical basis for broadening the use of stylistic data examine: (1) the changing relations between the individual and society, and (2) agency in cultural change as reflected in how history is selectively used for constructing identities.

A CASE STUDY AMONG THE JU’HOANSI (IKUNG SAN)

The Ju’hoansi of the Kalahari or Ikung San of northwest Botswana and northeast Namibia need no introduction to archaeologists or anthropologists. Their ethnography has been well-documented in the work of Lee (1979, 1986, 1993); Lee and DeVore (1976); Marshall (1976); Howell (1979); Biesele (1990, 1993); Sibata (1981); Wiessner (1977, 1982) and Yellen (1977) amongst many others. Subsequently their history and position in the larger political economy of southern Africa has been elucidated by Wilmsen (1989) and Gordon (1992). Here I will briefly review the ethnographic situation in the 1970s and go on to describe economic and political developments that have occurred in the meantime. Then, drawing on the above evolutionary framework for guidelines, I will turn to style.

Background

In the mid-1970s when I completed my fieldwork in northwestern Botswana, the Ju’hoansi of the Dobe/Kae Kae area were primarily foragers (Figure 9.1). Subsistence was obtained from gathering, hunting, or working for neighboring agro-pastoralists, in that order. Settlement patterns within a band’s area of land rights (mloko) consisted of dispersals into small scattered camps during the wet season and aggregation at large camps during the dry season. Both meat and vegetable foods were widely shared. While food was plentiful in the mid- and late wet season, Ju’hoansi suffered shortages in the drier months, particularly as overgrazing by the herds of neighboring agro-pastoralists destroyed bush foods. Far-reaching networks of socially defined kinship, activated by partnerships of delayed, reciprocal exchange called xaro (bikaro) (Wiessner 1977, 1982, 1986, 1994), gave Ju’hoansi access to the resources of people in other mloko within a radius of approximately 150 km, the boundaries of the central Ikung dialect group (excluding Ju’hoansi who were settled on farms of other ethnic groups). Regular visiting on the basis of xaro relationships redistributed people over available resources in times of environmental or social hardship.

Strong egalitarian ethics prevailed in Ju’hoan society, and those who sought to accumulate wealth status were quickly leveled. Nonetheless, there were slight inequalities in status and unequal access to resources, for instance, older people had some priority over the young, and mloko kwani, “owner(s) of the place”, over those who moved in from other areas. Gender differences between men and women existed, but these were not linked to unequal status or access to resources. Egalitarianism provided the social matrix for sharing, xaro exchange, and all accompanying forms of mutual assistance, for help was given with the knowledge that it could not be used to build positions from which one could dominate or coerce another and that it must be reciprocated when conditions of ‘have’ and ‘have not’ were reversed. It is important to note, however, that egalitarianism amongst the Ju’hoansi was and is not grounded in conformity but rather in difference. The Ju’hoansi not only tolerate but appreciate individual difference (Biesele 1993); ethics of equality and accompanying sanctions then level disparities in access to material or social resources that can result from such differences.

Site structure was circular or semi-circular and open, expressing both the obligation to share and facilitating control of sharing by making the resources of any
household in the camp fully visible to others. Spacing between huts increased with kinship distance and corresponding obligations to share. Houses were of mixed styles, including traditional grass huts as well as more substantial mud and thatch huts, a building style adopted from surrounding agro-pastoralists.

Near Sclita, approximately 150 km to the east of Dobe and /Kae/kae, where Ju/'hoansi from the same population were settled on farms of Ju/wa and Herero, the situation was quite different. Here Ju/'hoansi were integrated into the lifestyle of the agro-pastoralists for whom they worked. The greatest proportion of food obtained was domestic, that is, milk, meat, and maize obtained from employers. Huts were more permanent structures, plastered, thatched, and often fenced. Xaro exchange was maintained with a few relatives in distant locations, but else was on the decline. Guns were used for hunting and few Ju/'hoansi possessed bows and arrows. Most Ju/'hoan material culture was replaced with store bought items of that of agro-pastoralists, and few Ju/'hoan women continued to make beadwork. Systematic stylistic comparison of arrows and beadwork between this area and Dobe-/Kae/kae was thus not possible.

To the west of Dobe and /Kae/kae in the Nyae Nyae area, rapid change was initiated from the outside in 1959. A South African administrator was sent to Nyae Nyae to assemble people at Tjumkui and establish a center offering a store, school, clinic, agricultural programs, permanent water, and wage labor. In 1970 an official Bushman homeland was proclaimed giving the southern part of traditional Ju/'hoan territory to the Herero and the northern part to a game reserve. In contrast to communities in Botswana, change in the Nyae Nyae area was imposed from the outside and not the product of integration with other ethnic groups. It generated problems within that had to be solved from within, for Ju/'hoansi were artificially kept in a world of other Ju/'hoansi by the borders of their homeland. By 1973 and 1975, as many as 900 Ju/'hoansi, largely from the Nyae Nyae area, were settled at Tjumkui either in government-built 'location' houses, concrete bungalows, or in more traditional 'villages' surrounding Tjumkui. The better part of subsistence came from rations provided by the government, supplemented by bush foods available in the vicinity of Tjumkui. There were, in addition, ample opportunities for economic gain from wage labor or sale of crafts.

With such dense settlement and new economic opportunities, inter-individual competition and social inequalities began to develop. The pendulum at Tjumkui swung between a tendency to show off new found wealth, in contravention to social norms, and attempts to restore harmony and equal distribution of wealth through
giving. In the process, Tjumkui Ju/'hoansi constructed complex xaro networks that wound their way through the villages of Tjumkuii, activating a wide range of kinship ties and redistributing wealth to appease. But such means of redistributing wealth was only a partial solution, for the employed were able to maintain two to four times as many xaro partners as the unemployed, breeding jealousy. Tension mounted and many turned to alcohol, greatly exasperating these problems. A new era of frequent physical violence began which took the lives of many Ju/'hoansi in the 1980s and early 1990s. Tjumkui became both a magnet for its wealth and action and the dreaded 'place of death' marked by conflict, alcohol, and sickness. When problems at home could not be solved, Tjumkui residents fled to live with xaro partners in Botswana for months at a time.

In the mid to late 1970s developments were also taking place in the Dobe/Kaes area that are worth mentioning for the contrast they provide with the Nyae Nyae area of the 1990s. In the face of the destruction of traditional veld resources by the herds of neighboring agro-pastoralists, Ju/'hoansi of different camps chose different options. Some had long ago attached themselves to the households of agro-pastoralists and engaged in casual labor in exchange for domestic foods. Others just gleaned what they could from any source. The more enterprising in certain camps of Dobe and Kaes followed the agro-pastoralist model and began to plant gardens and build small herds on their own. This was a laborious process—to earn the cash to purchase a single cow required months of wage labor or crafts production. During a narrow window of time, items that were acquired by hard work, for instance livestock, began to move into the category of private possession, though the meat and milk were shared. A certain number of blankets and other utilitarian items became accepted as essential household possessions which need not be given away at request of others. With an increase in livestock and material possessions, the structure of some camps began to change from an open circular one to a linear one with houses more widely spaced and fenced (Yellen 1984). Possessions were locked in trunks for the first time. Such developments were later curbed by the introduction of food relief programs in Botswana which reduced anxiety about future subsistence.

**Style in the 1970s**

I have discussed style in Ju/'hoan projectile points and beadwork of the 1970s in depth elsewhere (Wiessner 1983, 1984); here I will give a brief overview as background to understanding developments of the 1990s.

**Projectile Points**

In the mid-1970s, Ju/'hoan projectile points were of great significance for their functional attributes, social ones (the exchange of projectile points specifies obligations for meat sharing), and because an arrow fired in a moment of anger can kill. Certain attributes, namely length and width of projectile points, delimited the broader Ju/'hoan population that pooled risk, essentially the Ju/'hoan dialect group. These attributes indicate an implicit understanding that all within this pool held similar values with respect to land rights, sharing, and aggression avoidance, thereby underwriting networks of social kinship and reciprocal access to resources.

Ju/'hoan projectile points could be immediately distinguished from those of other linguistic groups such as the Nharo, G/wi, and !Ko on the basis of length and width. Although the points from all three linguistic groups followed the same functional principles (sufficient penetration for poison to be effective) and were used on a similar range of animals, Ju/'hoan points were about half the size of G/wi and !Ko points. Ju/'hoansi expressed some fear and suspicion about people who made their arrows so differently.

Within these limits of size, distal point shape, body shape, and base shape varied greatly, expressing personal identity. Individuals did not produce regular styles that would serve as marks of ownership. However hunters sought regularity in every batch of points, so that those given or loaned to others could be recognized and obligations for meat sharing carried out accordingly.

**Glass headwork**

Sewn glass headwork consisting of headbands, necklaces, aprons, bags, and belts were the most desired items for adornment and cherished gifts for xaro exchange. When circulated in xaro, they cemented relationships between giver and receiver. Though they might travel far in the xaro network, the name of the maker was generally retained. Headbands had particular significance for they were worn on important social and ceremonial occasions. Variation in headband design played upon a repertoire of nine different major designs and five different background designs (see Wiessner 1984: Figs. 2, 3). Three of the former were considered to be headband designs, and the remaining were designs usually found on belts or aprons but occasionally used on headbands. Five different background designs were regularly employed. The combination of patterns used, size of beads, design structure, and kinds of items made expressed Bushman identity and separated desert Bushmen from peoples other linguistic groups, though no outstanding internal divisions were found between the Ju/'hoansi, G/wi, Nhara,
and !Xo of Botswana. Particularly important was design structure which consisted of a central design that wove its way through one or more background designs, usually not more than two (Fig. 9.2, a-d). This structure described was by some as evoking the image of a person 'walking softly', in other words exhibiting modesty, reserve, and consideration.

Within the standard repertoire of beadwork designs and structure, there was much room for personal expression in the use of color and combination of major and background designs. Ju/'hoan beadworkers played with these possibilities most creatively. The variation exhibited in Ju/'hoan beadwork encapsulated the relation of the individual to society. The individual's diligence, skill, and creativity had room for expression (Fig. 9.2, c-d), but this was contained by design structure that symbolized values of modesty and reserved behavior held by the society as a whole. Personal markers denoting ownership were absent, for ultimately the greatest value of beadwork (and other items of material culture as well) was its social worth when given in xaro exchange.

Social Change and Style at Tjumukui in the 1970s

At Tjumukui, beadwork boomed with the construction of internal xaro paths to mediate emergent social inequalities and other problems of the densely settled community and unequal opportunities. New styles appeared as Ju/'hoan women, in comparing themselves with others and their past identities with current ones, innovated and differentiated. They drew on the traditional design repertoire, reproducing traditional items and design elements, but ruptured the former design structure which carried implications of modesty and reserve. For headbands, several major designs were combined on one piece, or more frequently, background designs were accentuated to fill the entire piece (Fig. 9.2, c-e). The structure of a central design meandering through a more discreet background, 'walking softly' was replaced by what was often a more ostentatious, although strikingly beautiful combination of designs. In short, with economic opportunities and dissolution of the social order, personal expression flourished, expanding the limits of design structure and altering the former balance of individual and group expression.

Beadworkers in Botswana had an interesting reaction to these new styles. On the one hand, they admired these pieces for their striking beauty and the more affluent lifestyle that they represented. On the other hand, they were said to be to be busy "like the many people talking (quarreling) at once at Tjumukui" and not representative of the soft-spokeness and discretion so prized in Ju/'hoan society. Tjumukui residents, also aware that these styles represented altered relations and values, tended to choose more traditional designs when making or selecting xaro gifts to give to relatives in Botswana, presumably as a token of respect for their lifestyle (Wiessner 1984).

The new designs, in recombining elements of the traditional repertoire, expressed developments initiated from within: the reworking of existing relations and values in response to economic change imposed from the outside. However, imports in beadwork styles occurred simultaneously, reflecting new contact with other populations. One was a new form of beadwork, the European tie made with glass or ostrich eggshell beads to be worn to official meetings. It combined Ju/'hoan and western attire with a good touch of humor. Others were imported unaltered by those who traveled to other areas and not integrated into traditional Ju/'hoan styles. These included collars of 'lace beadwork' and necklaces of beads sewn into a 'rope' which are found in several other ethnic groups of Southern Africa, but are not a part of the traditional Ju/'hoan repertoire.

Change in the 1990s

In 1978 and 1979, Ju/'hoansi of the Nyae Nyae area (Tjumukui) began joining the South African Defense force when bases were established in west Bushmanland, a formerly waterless region. Only about 10% of the population was employed by the defense force, largely males of suitable age and physical condition, but others flocked to the vicinity of the bases to reap benefits—cash from the employed, schooling, medicine, well-stocked stores, electronic entertainment, and so on. Pay was relatively high by Ju/'hoan standards, and previously unknown amounts of money poured into the area to be spent on alcohol, clothing, household goods, radios, phonographs, bicycles, and some livestock. The employed were permitted by their peers to keep more than others, provided that the better portion of their income was circulated within the broader population. Though many Ju/'hoansi look at this as a golden age of wealth, virtually all were repelled by the idea of involvement in the business of killing, even though few soldiers from the Nyae Nyae area actually saw combat. This situation was to last for the next ten years.

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, the Ju/'hoansi of Nyae Nyae faced two major threats. One was the proposal of the South African Government to make a game reserve out of their former lands—since most Ju/'hoansi were settled at Tjumukui or in police/army camps, the land was temporarily empty. A second source of pressure came from Herero living to the south who had their eyes on the rich and largely empty grassland of their Ju/'hoan
neighbore. In the early 1980s, small groups of Ju/'hoansi, repelled by the conditions at Tsumkwe, began to move back to their traditional lands. These initiatives received strong support from the anthropologists and film makers John Marshall and Claire Ritchie who together with the Ju/'hoansi founded the Nyae Nyae Development Foundation of Namibia. By 1982 over thirty groups had moved back to their traditional areas.

The ensuing events are both heartening and unique amongst the San of southern Africa. Here I can give but a brief outline; excellent descriptions can be found in Biesele (1990), Lee (1993), Marshall and Ritchie (1984), amongst others. The Ju/'hoansi formed the Nyae Nyae Farmer's Cooperative in 1989, and drawing on funds raised by the foundation, were able to have boreholes drilled, provide their members with small herds of cattle at highly subsidized prices (Ritchie 1989), initiate agricultural programs, promote Ju/'hoan literacy in their own language, and organize a crafts marketing program. Wage labor, upon which many Ju/'hoan families had been dependent in the 1970s and 1980s, virtually ceased (outside of a few government jobs at Tsumkwe) and programs were aimed at self-sufficiency through a mixed economy of agriculture, hunting and gathering, and crafts production. An administrative and training center was established for the cooperative at Baraka. Decisions within the cooperative are made by a body of elected leaders representing each of the villages.

The Nyae Nyae Farmer's Cooperative is making great strides in securing and protecting the land of the Ju/'hoansi and providing them with a voice in the government of Namibia. In 1992, a further step to give Ju/'hoan rights over their resources came from a government and World Wildlife initiative to establish conservancies which would allow minority groups to take control over their own resources. Over a five year period, US $1,500,000 is to be invested in the area for establishing the conservancy and planning utilization of resources (Marshall 1996). The proceeds are to be returned to communities. While all this was happening, the Namibian government of the 1990s began to invest in the area. During the better part of the period since independence, the government has provided communities with monthly 'relief' rations of maize meal, oil, and beans via an effective distribution system. These rations are sufficient to support households throughout the year, although the
Ju/'hoansi consider the diet tedious. Ju/'hoansi over 60 years of age receive monthly pensions from mobile ATM machines that spit out cash upon recognition of finger prints.

What does this mean for the life of the average Ju/'hoan? First and foremost, virtually all serious environmental risks caused by limited water and pronounced seasonal and yearly climatic fluctuations have been eliminated. The bulk of the diet comes from store bought food and relief rations. Hunting and gathering, small herds, and planting provide dietary supplements—though at least in recent years, harvests have yielded little and many cattle have been sold or slaughtered. Permanent settlements have been established at boreholes. Finally, with legislation backing efforts to keep agro-pastoralists from moving into Ju/'hoan land, Ju/'hoansi live in world composed primarily of Ju/'hoansi, and not together with agro-pastoralists as in Botswana. The only exception is at the administrative center of Tsumkwe where Ju/'hoansi reside with Herero, Okavango, Damara, Europeans, and others who have come there for work, business, or schooling. While at Baraka, there is a strong sense of Ju/'hoan identity forming amongst those in the Nyae Nyae Farmer’s Cooperative who deal with external relations, this is not the case in most villages where people are concerned with daily needs and internal relations.

Upon returning to the Ju/'hoansi after a twenty year absence, I had a number of expectations based on knowledge of the altered economy, secure food and water, trends that were appearing in the 1970s, and the assumption that experiences during the defense force years would alter goals, values, relationships, and the meaning of material culture. These included: (1) decreased mobility, narrowing xaro networks, and less sharing on a daily basis; (2) more material possessions, minor capital accumulation, and accompanying changes in site structure toward wider but spacing and a less open site plan; and (3) a larger proportion of goods purchased than received in exchange, increased wealth differentials between households, and a continuation of individual innovation in beadwork styles.

Fieldwork was to yield some surprises. The data presented here are preliminary results from ongoing research in three villages that are well separated in space: Xamsa, N‘ama, and Mangetti Pos (Figure 9.1). First subsistence, sharing, exchange and settlement patterns will be examined to document that changes that have occurred, and in this context, stylistic developments analyzed.

Mobility

Permanent settlement at boreholes, cash income, availability of foodstuffs at stores, and relief food have led to decreased mobility in two respects. The first is in seasonal rounds. Today Ju/'hoansi remain year-round in permanent villages, hunting and gathering within a radius of about 5-7 km. Some people, though few, occasionally go further afield on hunting-gathering trips of 1-5 days. The second is the decline in extended visiting trips to the camps of xaro partners 20-150 km away that so characterized Ju/'hoan life in the past. For instance, data from 1968-9 collected by Richard Lee and that for 1974 collected by myself for the Dobe/Kae/KaeJu/'hoansi indicate that the average Ju/'hoan spent approximately three months a year living in camps of xaro partners and hunting and gathering resources of those visited (Wiesner 1981, 1982). Day visits to nearby camps were extremely common. By contrast, extrapolating from visiting data collected for two weeks out of every month between August 1996 through February 1997 at Xamsa and Mangetti Pos, the average Mangetti resident now spends approximately 36 days a year away from home and the average Xamsa resident 23 days. The most common destination (70% of all days spent away) is the administrative center of Tsumkwe, where people from widely dispersed villages meet, socialize, exchange gifts and news, shop, seek medical care, visit children at school, tend to official matters, and frequent drinking establishments run by people from other ethnic groups. Overnight visits to other camps comprise only 30% of days away, though day visits to villages within a radius of 5-15 km are common. Thus, with steady supplies of food and water in the villages, extended visiting is declining markedly except to Tsumkwe, the only true 'town' in Bushmanland, where people from all parts of Bushmanland converge to obtain non-traditional resources.

Subsistence and Food Sharing

The subsistence income of all families in the three villages was measured daily for two weeks out of every month from August 1996-February 1997, as well as food consumed and where it was obtained. Preliminary results show a 90% dependence on government rations and trade store foods purchased with crafts or pension money from the period of August to November for Xamsa and N‘ama. For Mangetti Pos, where mongongo nuts were available, there was roughly a 70% dependence on rations. At Xamsa a large animal was killed approximately every six weeks, at N‘ama no large animal was killed during this period, and at Mangetti Pos three medium-sized animals and a number of small animals were killed. Meat was widely shared as in the past. Collection of data on wet season subsistence is currently in progress - women go on gathering trips 2-3 times a week to collect wild vegetable foods that make up between 30-50% of the wet season diet. Bush foods are a welcome supplement to the dull diet of maize meal. In February, 1997, rations of maize meal...
were discontinued for two months, and in this year of bountiful veldt foods, Ju'hoansi could support themselves by hunting, gathering, and purchasing food from the store or mobile peddlers. Since April, rations have been provided once again, and hunting and gathering is decreasing radically while major bush foods rot in the veldt.

Very interesting in view of the fact that households receive similar rations is the sharing of all types of food remains central to Ju'hoan life. For instance, of 297 meals recorded for eight families at Xamda from July, 1996, until January, 1997, 198 or 66% of meals were either consumed at the hearth of others or included food contributions from others. Food sharing in the other two camps followed a similar pattern. Widespread food sharing takes place for the pleasure of sociality, because reduced firewood supply at permanent settlements makes it more efficient to cook in one pot, and very importantly, as a way to uphold the practice of equal access to the resources of others. Were sharing to break down on a daily basis, it would be hard to activate sharing obligations for scarcer and more desired foods - meat, milk and store bought foods.

Xaro Exchange

Data on xaro partners of all adults in the three villages were collected and subsequently all possessions of the household recorded together with information on how and where they were obtained. As is clear in Table 9.1, the scope of xaro has narrowed greatly in the 1990s. The average Ju’hoan of the Nyae Nyae area today has 6.9 xaro partners as compared to 16.0 for /Kae/kae, Dobe, and Tjumkui (Nyae Nyae) Ju’hoansi in the 1970s. Some individuals interviewed are in both the 1974 and 1997 samples.

In terms of kin relations, the greatest decline in xaro exchange is occurring with distant relatives, though xaro with close relatives is also waning. In space, average numbers of partners in a person’s camp remains approximately the same, while substantial decreases are occurring in partnerships with Ju’hoansi in other camps, a predictable result of declining mobility. Short xaro chains of 3-5 people still link families related by marriage, but only a few older Ju’hoansi maintain chains that bring in gifts from afar.

While in the past, explanations of xaro had been consistent, today people of different age groups have very different views, reflecting changes in the system. Older people see xaro partnerships as semi-formalized relationships which open access to the resources of partners in nearby and distant places, as one man put it “xaro is about unreliable food and water, or at least it was in the past”. They are also aware that xaro gifts used to travel along chains of partners, as material goods were imported and exported to different areas (Wissner 1994). Some lament the decline of networks as old xaro partners pass away. By contrast, most young people have no clear concept of xaro and no knowledge of former xaro chains. They only know that one engages in xaro exchange with particularly beloved relatives or friends for whom one feels strong obligations for mutual support.

Despite these trends, Ju’hoansi still attach great importance to xaro exchange as evidenced by the fact that about 50% of the average Ju’hoan’s possessions are still received in xaro (see below). Xaro continues to designate kindred members to whom individuals have strong obligations and affections, underwrites affinal ties, redistributes material goods, and is one of several ways in which ties with other villages are maintained. People catch rides on trucks to visit xaro partners and bring or request gifts from them, enjoying the diversion and chance to socialize. During such visits a number of things transpire. If people of one village have received some things that another has not, part of these are shared with visitors. Moreover, much information about what is hap-
Table 9.2 Comparison of number of possessions of Xamsa households in 1997 with those of /Kae/kae and Dobe households in 1974 (see also Wiessner 1982).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>/Kae/kae 1974</th>
<th>Tjumkui 1974</th>
<th>Xamsa 1997</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>beadwork</td>
<td>n=16</td>
<td>n=9</td>
<td>n=8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>22.1</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>blankets</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>clothing</td>
<td>11.0</td>
<td>16.4</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kitchenware</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>9.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hunting &amp; gathering equipment</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>livestock</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tjumkui residents were interviewed when visiting Botswana. Had they been interviewed at their homes in Tjumkui, their number of possessions would have been substantially higher.

Penning in other villages is gleaned during such visits: whether relief foods and pensions have reached other villages, where trucks from the Nyae Nyae Farmer's Cooperative have gone to buy crafts, which villages have been visited by tourists, and so on. Through maintaining such a networks of exchange, Ju/'hoansi keep a finger on the pulse of developments occurring within the broader region and thereby are able to take action to insure continuing access. And so, xaro of the 1990s is no longer about fluctuations in water and food as it was in the past, nor does it serve to mediate tensions and developing social inequalities as at Tjumkui during the 1970s. Today it is hovering in a state of transition, keeping many doors open, and ready to be applied to the possibilities and problems that the future might bring.

Material Possessions

Comparison of material possessions between the mid-1970s for /Kae/kae and Tjumkui Ju/'hoansi and Ju/'hoansi of Xamsa village in 1977 indicate that Ju/'hoansi of the 1990s have, on the average, no more possessions than did Ju/'hoansi surveyed in the 1970s (Table 9.2). The data for the two other villages, Mangetti Pos and Nsama, have not yet been compiled; however, preliminary counts indicate that they do not differ substantially from Xamsa. The masses of material goods purchased during the South African Defense Force years have vanished on xaro networks, have been exchanged for beer, or lie broken in the sand for future archaeologists.10

Cash incomes of the 1980s and 1990s are much higher than they were in the 1970s for Botswana residents, store bought goods much more easily accessible, and there are no of barriers to accumulation caused by mobility. And so the fact that Ju/'hoansi possess no more today than in the 1970s is the result of the meaning attached to things, not access to possessions nor facilities to store them. For most Ju/'hoansi, accumulation of possessions beyond a basic repertoire to meet daily needs is pointless in view of the social value of material goods when used in exchange. Giving yields credit for generosity and strengthens social bonds; accumulation draws little admiration and may invite criticism if done conspicuously. The rapid turnover of goods which results does little to encourage conservation or repair, and with the exception of beadwork and a few other items, material goods have a short life. Finally, many material goods today are given to members of other ethnic groups for beer, together with the intensive social activity that drinking evokes.

That the principle value of material possessions, beyond a basic inventory necessary for household needs, is for exchange rather than accumulation is further confirmed by analysis of sources of possessions. Though number of xaro partners has declined to less than half of what it was in the 1970s, the reduction percentage of household possessions received in xaro is small in proportion. In the 1970s, for Dobe-Kae/kae and Tjumkui Ju/'hoansi, 69% of all possessions were received in xaro, 27% bought or made and 4% were gifts from non-Ju/'hoansi in comparison with to 50% received in xaro at Xamsa in 1996-7, 31% bought or made, 5% received from non-Ju/'hoansi and 14% received in casual giving between friends. The latter is a product of less formally defined exchange relationships in the younger generation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Village</th>
<th>No. of Huts</th>
<th>No. of Hearths</th>
<th>Average Distance Between Huts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dobe 1963-4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7.0m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dobe 1968-9</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>7.1m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dobe 1975-6</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10.8m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dobe 1980</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11.6m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nyae Nyae 1997:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xamua</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5.2m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mangetti Pos</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9.9m (6.6m within segments)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nama (1)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8.5m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nama (2)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7.0m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nama (3)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9.0m</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: Dobe figures are measured from Yellen’s (1984) illustrations. These are base camps at permanent water. Spacing of huts in some small temporary bush camps is narrower (Yellen 1977).

For semi-circular camps, nearest neighbor was measured with the space between the first and last hut in the semi-circle excluded.

Village Structure

As John Yellen has so clearly shown for the Dobe Ju/'hoansi, the structure of camps in the 1960-1980s was altered as Ju/'hoan families began to cultivate their own gardens, establish their own herds, and accumulate more material possessions (Gelburd 1978). In the 1960s, when Dobe Ju/'hoansi owned no livestock, camp structure was roughly circular with the average distance between huts at the 1963-4 Dobe camp approximately 7 m (Table 9.3). An open plan made the possessions and foodstuffs of each household readily visible to others and subject to requests for sharing. In 1968-9 when the first goats had been acquired, the goat kraal was placed outside the hut circle at close proximity, but site structure and hut spacing were not altered. By 1975-6 with further increase in herd size, planting, and private possessions, the circular pattern was disrupted by the integration of the kraal into the hut circle, dividing the camp into two semi-circular clusters of huts that face the kraal. Measurements made from Yellen’s illustrations indicate an increase in hut spacing to an average of 10.8 m between huts. The most interesting change came in the 1980 camp with an increase in the herd of livestock, western material possessions, and private property. The base camp was then constructed in a linear structure with houses facing the kraal, not each other. Spacing between huts widened to an average of 11.6 m. Residents of this camp possessed trunks in which private property could be concealed from others and locked away. And so, with an increase in food production as a result of individual family enterprise, accumulation of property, and reduction of sharing, site
structure was altered from an circular open one with closely spaced huts to a linear one in which household food and belongings were not open to public view. Grass huts were replaced with more permanent plaster huts.

Are these lines of development continuing with permanent settlement and farming programs in the Nyae Nyae area today? It is difficult to generalize, for there is great variation in site structure of different villages in the Nyae Nyae area of the 1990s as well as experimentation each time a village is constructed anew. For instance, a few communities have built villages on a linear plan feeling that this is modern. However, sites plans in these cases does not alter use of space, for people continue to live in these as if they were circular, concentrating all major activities in one or two communal areas adjacent to the line of huts. Most villages, however, resemble the Dobe camp of the mid-1970s in that the traditional circular pattern has been disrupted by the integration of new communal facilities on one side - for instance the tap that provides water for the village, kruas, chicken coops, or small kitchen gardens with irrigation hoses. As vehicles deliver important resources, a parking area in full view of all households is integrated into many villages.

Most houses are larger than in the past and constructed from plaster and thatch, though traditional grass huts are still built by some. Most village plans remain open, usually in a semi-circular arrangement so that households can easily observe the activities of others. Huts are rarely fenced and only one locking trunk was recorded in the villages studied. Rather than the traditional one hearth per hut, the five villages mapped had an average of 0.4 huts per hearth, with two or more family units sharing one hearth, perhaps a response to shortage of firewood within close proximity. Hut spacing has not increased significantly compared to that of Dobe in the 1960s (Table 9.3). Thus, in villages of the Nyae Nyae area, the needs of permanent settlement have been accommodated by more substantial housing and village plans have been altered to incorporate new economic activities within or adjacent to the hut circle. However, site plans remain open and hut spacing relatively narrow, discouraging private accumulation.

Summary

The variety of economic strategies to make a living practiced over the past twenty years show a great openness on the part of the Ju/hoansi to take advantage of new economic opportunities. Historical studies suggest that this has been the case for hundreds of years (Gordon 1992, Wilmsen 1989). Nonetheless, food sharing, zero exchange, sources and numbers of material possessions, and site structure indicate that there is persistence in the primary value of material goods as a currency of social exchange and in the structure and terms of kinship relations and accompanying exchange. Outstanding among these is the strong current of equality and respect between Ju/hoansi. And it is these terms that keep access to the resources of others in the region open, for people can welcome others without fear of exploitation, something which is not true of relations with non-Ju/hoansi. As long as equality is preserved and obligations of kinship maintained, zero exchange can be restructured to give Ju/hoansi access to the resources of others in the broader region.

Conversations with Ju/hoansi indicate that the desire to maintain such relations is not a remnant of the past, but rather a strategy in view of the events of recent history. For the last thirty years the major economic opportunities that have come to the Nyae Nyae area have come from the outside in the form of government programs or development aid. Accordingly Ju/hoansi are optimistic about the future and have great expectations of the wealth that will flow from trophy hunters, ostrich farms, or a booming tourist business when their conservancy is approved. They are also well aware that if some get a foot in the door of inequality, these families will remain in a position of advantage. With the anticipation of wealth to come, most Ju/hoansi seek to preserve equal access to resources of the region and thereby maintain an equal right to what the future will bring. This comes in contrast to the Ju/hoansi in the Dobe/Kae/kae area during the 1970s whose negative perception of future economic opportunities urged a change on the part of some towards the models of agro-pastoralism and with it the development of minor social inequalities and capital accumulation described by Gelburt (1978), Yellen (1984), Wiessner (1982) and Wilmsen (1989).

STYLISTIC CHANGE

Returning to the issues raised in the first part of this paper, I will address three questions in the following analysis of stylistic change: (1) Do beadwork and projectile points continue to have significant enough social meaning in Ju/hoansi society to be used to communicate information about identity? If not, is this possible to determine from formal variation? (2) Is it possible to glean information from stylistic analysis about the changing relations between the individual and society that occurred in the Nyae Nyae area over the last twenty-five years? (3) How are stylistic markers and their meanings from the past called up selectively in the process of re-constructing social identity in view of current social, economic, and political concerns?
Seeking Guidelines through an Evolutionary Approach

Table 9.4 Comparison of design structure in Ju/'hoan beaded headbands for the 1970s and 1990s.

Developed major designs embellish simple designs, but remain within the traditional design structure. (Fig. 9.1, c-d). Complex designs break with traditional structure, combining several major designs on one headband or accentuating background designs to dominate central ones (Fig. 9.1, e-g).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Basic</th>
<th>Developed</th>
<th>Complex</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dobe</td>
<td>11 (38%)</td>
<td>13 (45%)</td>
<td>5 (17%)</td>
<td>29 (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/Kae/kae</td>
<td>51 (63%)</td>
<td>22 (27%)</td>
<td>8 (10%)</td>
<td>81 (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tjum/kui</td>
<td>4 (18%)</td>
<td>6 (27%)</td>
<td>12 (55%)</td>
<td>22 (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nyae Nyae</td>
<td>27 (46%)</td>
<td>28 (47%)</td>
<td>4 (7%)</td>
<td>59 (100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Beadwork

In answer to the first question, sewn glass beadwork is an art that is flourishing in the 1990s and its products remain the most valued items of self-adornment and most prized gifts in xaro exchange. Beadwork continues to be exchanged to underwrite networks of social kinship and their corresponding relationships of equality and respect. By contrast, virtually all other forms of traditional material culture have been replaced with store bought ones due to the superior functional qualities of the latter and desire on the part of Ju/'hoansi to keep up with changing times.

In answer to the second question—yes, both the increase in personal expression that came with new economic opportunities and emerging social inequalities in the 1970s, as well as the subsequent swing back in the opposite direction during the 1990s, are indeed expressed in beadwork styles. As can be seen in Table 9.4, virtually all the complex headband designs developed at Tjum/kui in the 1970s which evoked a scene of 'many people taking at once' (Fig. 9.2, e-g). In the mid-1990s, simple and developed designs predominate, demonstrating the competence of beadworkers, but keeping within the traditional design structure, 'to walk softly', associated with the modesty and respect of others that comes with equality. Gone too are styles imported in the 1970s from other ethnic groups—beaded necklaces sewn into lace or rope patterns. They are still produced for the crafts shops of Windhoek, not for Ju/'hoan women—only three such pieces were found amongst all the sewn beadwork recorded.

The range of designs has also narrowed. The three traditional headband-specific designs were used on 89% of pieces recorded in the mid 1990s by contrast to only 65% of Tjum/kui headbands in the 1970s. The simplest design (Wiesner 1984: Fig. 2c) which permits almost no embellishment with background designs increased in frequency from 4% in the 1970s to 24% in the 1990s. No designs from other ethnic groups were incorporated into the repertoire. It should be noted that parallel trends have taken place in the design of women's beaded pubic aprons and beaded bags, though analysis of such is beyond the scope of this paper.

In answer to the third question, the reconstruction of identity through drawing selectively on past styles and their associated meanings is indeed expressed in Ju/'hoan material culture. First, the continuing and enthusiastic production of beadwork, the principal currency used in support of social kinship networks, in the face of the decline in other forms of traditional material culture, indicates that it is traditional social networks that the Ju/'hoansi are actively maintaining despite rapid economic change. Recall for contrast that amongst Ju/'hoansi living on farms in the 1970s, social networks declined as people became attached to the households of agropastoralists, and correspondingly, the art of beadwork was maintained by only a few. Second, the fact that styles from the Tjum/kui era are neglected and that styles from an earlier period are selected represents a rejection of marked assertion of individual identity via style that occurred when Ju/'hoansi were settled at Tjum/kui and the reassertion of some aspects of social identity prevalent in pre-Tjum/kui times. Third, the fact that styles of beadwork are no longer being imported from surrounding populations locates the impetus for these developments to agency coming from within. Moreover, while the distribution of styles in space during the 1970s pointed to a localized center for innovation at Tjum/kui, the reversion to styles of earlier decades is occurring in all vil-
Table 9.5 Comparison of Ju/'hoansi projectile points recorded in 1974 and 1997.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1974</th>
<th>1997</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n=55</td>
<td>n=60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Length</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mean</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>9.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sd.</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Width</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mean</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>7.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sd.</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Width/Length</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>.74</td>
<td>.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sd.</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Distal point shape</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sharp</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rounded</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>very rounded</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Body Shape</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>convex</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>convex/straight</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>straight</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>convex/concave</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td><strong>Base shape</strong></td>
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<td>indented</td>
<td>30</td>
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<tr>
<td>straight</td>
<td>16</td>
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<tr>
<td>convex</td>
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The 1974 sample is from a wide range of hunters in N.W. Botswana who regularly cross the border to make extended visits to the Nyae Nyae area. The 1997 sample is composed of the arrows from the quivers eight hunters who are from widely dispersed villages in the Nyae Nyae area. All of these hunters also visit relatives in Botswana.

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'Convex/straight means that one side is convex and the other straight.'

Taking traditional Ju/'hoan symbols and sewing them into (or onto) more modern forms. A good example can be seen in the trousers of the elected traditional leader, Bobo Tsamikxao. Under Namibia's newly formed traditional leaders council, Bobo represents the Ju/'hoansi of the Nyae Nyae area. As an older man who grew up with no formal education, he must seek to understand current trends and integrate them with Ju/'hoan culture. In keeping with this role, his wife has taken a pair of western trousers and embroidered them with circular patterns of glass beads called /uta /nasi (owls eyes) which are one of the most characteristic decorative elements in the traditional Ju/'hoan repertoire of embroidered beadwork. As Nyae Nyae Farmers Cooperative develops, new styles will be designed hand in hand with the restructuring of Ju/'hoan identity relations from generation to generation.

**Style in Projectile Points**

Today Ju/'hoan projectile points and other hunting gear remain a part of the material repertoire largely because of enforced legislation stipulating that Ju/'hoansi may only hunt by traditional means and because large numbers of bows and arrows are sold to tourists. New illegal forms of hunting—hunting on horseback with spears or guns and using snares for large animals—are practiced occasionally by younger people throughout Botswana and Namibia, but when caught the hunters are prosecuted. Because traditional hunting is strenuous and requires specialized knowledge, many Ju/'hoan men, particularly men under forty, do not hunt with bow and arrow today.

There are three categories of men who produce arrows for hunting. The first are the good hunters who learned to hunt from their fathers and have continued to hunt over the last thirty years. These are few (except in some villages of the southern or northernmost parts of the Nyae Nyae area), but they are highly respected for their skills. When a large animal is killed, meat sharing conforms to past practices. The second are the occasional hunters, men who learned to hunt during childhood, but ceased bow and arrow hunting with employment at Tsumkwe or by the army. Many of these men are competent in hunting on horseback, with guns, or in using snares. Such men possess quivers which they carry just in case they might come across opportunities or trouble when traveling in the bush. They rarely kill anything, and snickers are heard when these men say that they hunt. The third is comprised of men of all ages who make bows, quivers, and arrows to sell for the tourist trade. Due to stringent requirements on the part of buyers, many of these can only be distinguished from true hunting gear by the fact that the arrows are not poisoned.
Seeking Guidelines through an Evolutionary Approach

As a result of these developments, most men do not possess functional quivers, the exchange of arrows is very limited, and few hunters hunt outside a 5-10 km radius of their own villages. The social significance of arrows has thus greatly declined except among a small inner circle of good hunters. It is probably fair to say that variability in arrows is slowly moving from being 'style', through which aspects of identity are communicated, to isochronetic variation, in which arrows are reproduced following 'tradition'. As can be seen in Table 9.5, hunters continue to produce arrows conforming to styles they acquired from their fathers, and so arrow styles of the 1990s do not differ significantly from those of the 1970s. However, 'occasional hunters' (not included in Table 9.5) tend to have arrows that are poorly made, in poor condition, and display a wide range of size and shape in one set. Quality thus decreases with loss of social meaning.

Because of the declining role of projectile points in Ju'hoan villages today and their association with the crafts industry, projectile points are not used to transmit information in the process of re-structuring identity, by stark contrast to beadwork. It should be noted, however, that this was not the case in the past, for virtually all older Ju'hoansi interviewed said that in the period from about 1910 to 1950, when metal began to be used and Ju'hoansi began to have more regular contact with non-Bushmen, there was great experimentation, innovation, and change in styles of projectile points. Samples of projectile points resembling those produced in the past that were made at my request by older Ju'hoansi demonstrate and great variability before the styles recorded in the 1970s became the mode.

CONCLUSION

Stylistic studies are complex due to the many possible sources of variation; it is not easy to get satisfying results. Perhaps for this reason a number of recent studies have begun by addressing the formidable problem of accounting for all sources of variation in artifacts. Most impressive efforts in this respect have been made in behavioral archaeology (Schiffer & Skibo 1997). For style in particular, Carr (1995) has made an exhaustive attempt to understand all the factors that can affect stylistic variation in his 'unified theory of artifact design'. Here I have taken quite a different tack because, important those these efforts are, if style is regarded as communication, it must be possible to narrow the field of questions asked. Human systems of non-verbal communication do not proceed following eighty-one pages of deliberations. Style may not maximize efficiency of information transfer, but the road is not long before inefficiency kills effectiveness. Stylistic communication is effective precisely because it follows certain lines that are comprehensible to others, comprehensible because they are grounded in human cognition. For this reason, I have tried to situate style in a fundamental cognitive process—personal and social identification via comparison—and through understanding this process, provide priority questions to be asked in stylistic analysis. Only then can the difficult methodological issues be addressed.

For the Ju'hoan case, an evolutionary approach yields some promising results. Three questions were derived from the framework of identification via comparison as focal points for diachronic analysis of style. The first was whether sufficient cultural meaning was attached to an artifact to make it likely to be used as a means of communication. As shown by the lack of stylistic change in Ju'hoan arrows in the face of substantial socio-economic change, when artifacts lose their meaning, they are no longer used to negotiate current identities. Second, a finding taken from social psychology, that identities in all humans have two components, a personal one and a social one, has given a theoretical basis to direct stylistic analysis toward the question of the changing relations between the individual and society through time. Results show that Ju'hoan beadwork is indeed a sensitive indicator of such changes, even over a short time span of 20-30 years. Third, the understanding that even though identification via comparison is a fundamental human cognitive process, the components of identity are culturally and historically constituted, has raised the importance of history in identity formation. Because during the social and stylistic comparison process individuals draw on both current and historical associations and state their positions relative to these, stylistic studies can productively yield information on how identity markers are selectively used in the process of restructuring identities through time. The results can in turn provide insights into the nature and agents of change, by examining what is preserved, what is discarded, what is imported from outside, on what are innovations built, and whether innovations are highly localized or broadly based. In the Ju'hoan case, economic change in the 1990s coming from outside is seen in subsistence remains and settlement patterns. The repertoire of material culture also indicates economic integration into the broader world economy, as traditional tools and clothing are replaced with western ones. However, style in beadwork presents another side of the story. It expresses the efforts of Ju'hoansi to draw selectively on their past and maintain the time-tried relations of equality, respect, and mutual reciprocity between people that provide the foundation for broad based networks of social support. Through such efforts, Ju/'
hoansi compose their own response and identities in a rapidly changing world.

This paper is but a first attempt. However, the results do suggest that evolutionary approaches may help us guide us through the many sources of variation in material remains and help us identify what is important, what we should seek in archaeological analyses, and what course might be followed.

Note on the Orthography

Patrick Dickens has published a standard orthography for the Ju/hoan language in his English-Ju/hoan, Ju/hoan-English Dictionary (Rüdiger Köppe Verlag, Cologne, 1994). This has been accepted by the Nyae Nyae farmer's cooperative. Conforming to Dickens' orthography requires changing spellings so that they deviate from those used in my previous publications. Noteworthy changes are Tsumkwe for Twaimkwe, /Ke/=Kae for /Xai/=Xai, and xaro for nxaro. I/Kung has been replaced by Ju/hoansi which is the dialect group of I/Kung speakers to which the central I/Kung belong. Ju/hoansi is both the singular and adjectival form.

ENDNOTES

1. To my limited knowledge, no concerted attempts have been made in archaeological analysis to see at what point in human evolution egalitarian societies first appeared, though evidence might be found in a change from sites with poorly differentiated living floors to sites with distinct, structurally similar household units, amongst other things.

2. It should be cautioned, however, that the referents of styles during comparison can range from vague associations to distinct meanings; what I have called 'subliminal' and 'assertive style' (Wiessner 1983). Specificity of referent, in turn, has a pronounced impact on the kind of information one can derive from style, and is a second level of meaning that must be considered. Distinct referents for personal expression are used to mark ownership or status positions, amongst other things. For social groups they usually delimit internal or external boundaries, and so give no measures of interaction even when intensive interaction exists. Stylistic elements with non-distinct referents, by contrast, indicate less specific feelings of affiliation, similarity, or association. As a result, they move more easily over boundaries and can be used as measures of influence or interaction. Emblematic style for both personal and group expression is rare in foraging societies where people seek to construct flung and seamless networks of reciprocity. It increases in frequency with social complexity, either with more intricate relations within a geographical region or hierarchical relations within a society.

3. The Ju/hoan kinship system is complex. First, the kinship universe is defined through conventional kin terms. It is further expanded and manipulated through the name-sharing relationship (Marshall 1976). Finally the xe relationship (Lee 1986) comes into play, allowing elders to choose how to classify juniors from the many possibilities that the name relationship offers. Xaro exchange partnerships then activate the obligations of some kin relations and leave others dormant.

4. Additional impetus for this also came from anthropologists working in the area.

5. This may be because in the 1970s only a few Nhao G/wi and Nk women made headbands. By contrast, preliminary results from Namibia indicate that inter-linguistic group stylistic differences between Ju/hoan and Nhao headwork do exist.

6. This case study will be limited to the Nyae Nyae area of Namibia. Due to the current ban on anthropological research in Botswana, it has not been possible to follow developments at Dobe and /Kae/Kae.

7. Scars remain from this time in the form of alcohol abuse and alienation owing to the fact that the enemy whom Ju/hoansi were hired to fight would soon become their builders of their new nation.

8. It should be noted that no Ju/hoan village today can be considered to be representative, for different villages have taken somewhat different paths. For example, a very few villages, usually those with immigrants from farming areas, have been successful in horticulture; a few have successfully retained cattle distributed by the Nyae Nyae foundation; in some villages, older men regularly hunt with bow and arrow, and two villages have started small projects to attract tourists.

9. Not including men who left for employment and single young men who travel widely to seek employment or visit girl friends.

10. Data on sources of possessions in all three villages show that very few material goods purchased during the defense force years are still in the hands of the buyer.

11. The decision to give Ju/hoansi welfare comes from perception of government and development agencies that their lifestyle was inadequate for the modern world and their abilities to cope with change insufficient. In fact, the Ju/hoansi are extremely resilient and adjust rapidly to new conditions and opportunities. Where real poverty exists, it is largely where the Ju/hoansi have been dispossessed of their land.

12. Ostrich eggshell beads have become an important export for the Namibian tourist trade, and because of their role in the cash economy, they no longer circulate in rare exchange and are not regularly used for personal adornment. Cash obtained from their sale is largely used to buy sugar, tea, tobacco, alcohol, and glass beads, all of which are either shared and consumed or, in the case of beads, circulated on exchange networks.

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10. LEVELING THE HUNTER
CONSTRAINTS ON THE STATUS QUEST IN
FORAGING SOCIETIES

Polly Wiessner

Perhaps the most outstanding aspect of status among foragers is its obscenity, the way it lurks in the shadows of society. For many cultures it is possible to investigate how food is used to help create, support or challenge status distinctions, but for foragers it is necessary to turn in the opposite direction and consider how individuals are prevented from using food for the same ends. The prevalence and strength of such sanctions among foragers in and of itself attests to the potential of food accumulation, display, and distribution as a tool for manipulating status. If this potential were not so potent, such measures would hardly be necessary. In this paper I will (1) discuss the role of food, particularly meat, in status seeking in twenty-seven forager societies, (2) examine sanctions exerted to level those who seek status, and (3) try to elucidate why such measures are both prevalent and successful.

Foragers

It has been recognized in the last two decades that the category hunter-gatherer, although useful for some purposes, incorporates societies that exhibit a great deal of variation in many realms of life. As a result, several attempts have been made to subdivide hunter-gatherers according to their subsistence strategies and degree of social complexity. The critical variable on which most of these clas-
The focus will be on meat rather than vegetable food products. The technique has potential for meat, but it is worthwhile to consider the contribution of meat to domestic diet. There are several variations, including the use of meat as a primary food product, and the technique may be extended to include other foods such as vegetables and fruits. The process involves the use of meat as a raw material, with subsequent processing to produce meat products. This technique has potential for meat processing, with the production of meat products being a major contributor to the economy. The technique may be extended to include other food products, such as vegetables and fruits, to produce a variety of meat products.

Methodology

The methodology for this study involves the use of meat as a raw material, with subsequent processing to produce meat products. This technique has potential for meat processing, with the production of meat products being a major contributor to the economy. The technique may be extended to include other food products, such as vegetables and fruits, to produce a variety of meat products.

Figures of the country's productivity in meat showed that the country's meat production is the highest in the world. This is due to the country's large population and the availability of suitable land for meat production. The technique has potential for meat processing, with the production of meat products being a major contributor to the economy. The technique may be extended to include other food products, such as vegetables and fruits, to produce a variety of meat products.

Supporting figures of plane and field experiments, which are important for the study of meat production, are provided in the figures. These figures show the relationship between meat production and the availability of suitable land. The technique has potential for meat processing, with the production of meat products being a major contributor to the economy. The technique may be extended to include other food products, such as vegetables and fruits, to produce a variety of meat products.

Figure 1: Figures of the country's productivity in meat showed that the country's meat production is the highest in the world. This is due to the country's large population and the availability of suitable land for meat production. The technique has potential for meat processing, with the production of meat products being a major contributor to the economy. The technique may be extended to include other food products, such as vegetables and fruits, to produce a variety of meat products.

Figure 2: The technique has potential for meat processing, with the production of meat products being a major contributor to the economy. The technique may be extended to include other food products, such as vegetables and fruits, to produce a variety of meat products.

Figure 3: The technique has potential for meat processing, with the production of meat products being a major contributor to the economy. The technique may be extended to include other food products, such as vegetables and fruits, to produce a variety of meat products.

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Figure 6: The technique has potential for meat processing, with the production of meat products being a major contributor to the economy. The technique may be extended to include other food products, such as vegetables and fruits, to produce a variety of meat products.

Figure 7: The technique has potential for meat processing, with the production of meat products being a major contributor to the economy. The technique may be extended to include other food products, such as vegetables and fruits, to produce a variety of meat products.

Figure 8: The technique has potential for meat processing, with the production of meat products being a major contributor to the economy. The technique may be extended to include other food products, such as vegetables and fruits, to produce a variety of meat products.

Figure 9: The technique has potential for meat processing, with the production of meat products being a major contributor to the economy. The technique may be extended to include other food products, such as vegetables and fruits, to produce a variety of meat products.

Figure 10: The technique has potential for meat processing, with the production of meat products being a major contributor to the economy. The technique may be extended to include other food products, such as vegetables and fruits, to produce a variety of meat products.

Figure 11: The technique has potential for meat processing, with the production of meat products being a major contributor to the economy. The technique may be extended to include other food products, such as vegetables and fruits, to produce a variety of meat products.

Figure 12: The technique has potential for meat processing, with the production of meat products being a major contributor to the economy. The technique may be extended to include other food products, such as vegetables and fruits, to produce a variety of meat products.

Figure 13: The technique has potential for meat processing, with the production of meat products being a major contributor to the economy. The technique may be extended to include other food products, such as vegetables and fruits, to produce a variety of meat products.

Figure 14: The technique has potential for meat processing, with the production of meat products being a major contributor to the economy. The technique may be extended to include other food products, such as vegetables and fruits, to produce a variety of meat products.

Figure 15: The technique has potential for meat processing, with the production of meat products being a major contributor to the economy. The technique may be extended to include other food products, such as vegetables and fruits, to produce a variety of meat products.
cerning the sharing of vegetable foods: staple foods that are widely available to all are usually distributed only within the household, to visitors or to closely related households whose members have not been able to gather that day. Only vegetable foods that are rare or highly variable in distribution, such as large roots among the Agta of the Philippines, are shared throughout the camp. It is unfortunate that there is not enough material in the literature to look at vegetable foods, because gathering provides the staple diet of most foragers, and some status appears to be accorded to good gatherers. Furthermore, because much competitive feasting involves vegetable foods or animals raised on them (Hayden 1990), a study of vegetable foods and status in foraging societies might provide valuable insights.

Status in Foraging Societies

Foragers are said to be some of the most fiercely egalitarian people in the world, tolerating no formalized differences in rank. It is necessary, then, to ask whether or not the concept of status exists at all among foragers, and if food could even be expected to be associated with status. The answer to this question is clearly affirmative: status, prestige, esteem, and high regard are terms that enter the ethnographies of most foraging societies, albeit with much qualification, even for societies that are considered the most egalitarian. It is mentioned in association with activities that benefit the group in some way: knowledge, ritual expertise, abilities in planning and organization, mediation, hunting skill, generosity, defense and interaction with outsiders. Ranking on the basis of high regard appears to begin at an early age in hunter-gatherers, as in other populations. For example, Hold (1980, Hold-Cavell this volume) found that children in G/wi San play groups form flexible hierarchies on the basis of focus of attention. Rank orders based on “high regard” are carried through until adulthood despite a strong socialization toward egalitarianism. When I asked about status, Kung San of the community of Xai/Xai were able to readily classify men and women as individuals of great (social) strength, ordinary people, people with little strength, and people who were literally “nothing” respectively. Evaluations of status or influence showed an association with a number of variables, among them ability to maintain many exchange partnerships, power as healers, competence in hunting, and ability to deal effectively with outsiders.

Meat has the potential to be one of the best vehicles for obtaining status in forager societies because of attributes that draw attention. Meat is a desired and nutritious food, the only one that can satisfy what

many hunter-gatherers experience as “meat hunger”. On any given day, its availability is highly variable from household to household, so possession of meat can put the owner into the focus of attention. Furthermore, the appropriate distribution of meat has the potential to reaffirm social alliances, relieve tension, and demonstrate organizational abilities, activities that are all associated with high regard (Grammer, this volume). In theory, then, the procurement and distribution of meat should be expected to be widely used to gain status. Indeed, ethnographies indicate that this is often but not always the case (See Figure 10.2), because there is considerable intercultural variation regarding what attributes and abilities confer status.

Figure 10.2 Hunting Success and Status in Foraging Societies.

| Good hunters receive: |
| Considerable status |
| West Greenland Inuit |
| Igulik Inuit |
| Ona |

| Some status |
| Western Desert Aborigines |
| Inuit of Quebec |
| Mbuti Pygmies |
| Gwonangga |
| Ho San |
| G/wi San |
| Kung San |
| Netsilik Inuit |
| Copper Inuit |
| Ammassalik Inuit |
| Ayoreo (high status for killing jaguar or men in warfare only) |
| Chipewyan |

| Generosity in sharing valued, but men do not gain high status through hunting |
| Washo |
| Gusukski/Ache |
| Batek |
| Pinupi |
| Hadza |
| Aka Pygmies |
| Andamanese |
| Agra |
| Juaai |
| Kaingang |

(insufficient information: Cree, Sibor)
Owning is the process of assuming control over something. In the context of human society, this often involves the acquisition and possession of resources and goods. The concept of ownership is complex and can vary greatly depending on cultural, legal, and social factors.

In many societies, the ability to own property is a significant indicator of social status and wealth. The right to own property is often protected by law, allowing individuals and groups to maintain control over their assets. However, the distribution of ownership is not always equal, and disparities in ownership can lead to social inequality and conflict.

In some cases, ownership of property is viewed as a right that should be protected at all costs. This can lead to situations where individuals or groups hoard resources, preventing others from accessing them. In other cases, ownership is seen as a means of promoting economic growth and social development. In these situations, policies may be implemented to ensure that ownership is distributed fairly and that resources are used in the public interest.

Regardless of the specific context, the concept of ownership is a central aspect of human society and plays a critical role in shaping the way we interact with the world around us.
right to distribute it assigned solely to the hunter who made the first hit or demobilized the animal. Four of these are Inuit groups for whom meat provides the bulk of the diet. In another five societies, the meat is either divided among members of a hunting party at the kill site or owned by the hunter if he is alone. Washo net hunting provides an exception. Here, the owner of the net or the drivers who captured individual rabbits have the right to keep them. Surplus rabbits are shared widely. The distinction between this category and the first is simply a matter of whether hunting is more often a group enterprise as opposed to an individual enterprise. For three societies, ownership of meat is divided between the hunter and implement owner, and in another six meat is owned by the hunter, but often given to others, such as elders or women in the camp, for distribution. Among the Hadza, who hunt large game almost exclusively, ownership is not clearly specified. Finally, in seven societies, the kill is considered to be the property of the person who owns the implement that inflicted the first hit or struck the blow that disabled the animal. This means, of course, that in most cases the carcass goes to the successful hunter, since the hunter who brought down the animal is usually the owner of the implement as well. Nonetheless, the potential of attributing the kill to the owner of the implement is significant—it can take the focus off the hunter and pass the obligation for the distribution to another who had not even participated in the hunt. For instance, Bahuchet (1990: 41) mentions that Aka elders who can no longer hunt loan weapons to younger men, and in that way can still preside over the sharing, enter the exchange network, and receive meat without losing dignity. Among the !Kung, the meat distribution can be a burden, particularly if the successful hunter is visiting another camp and “does not know the hearts of the people.” He can then choose to hunt only with borrowed arrows, and thereby to pass the responsibility for distribution over to a senior member of the camp. Or, if a hunter is undergoing severe criticism for acting like a big shot, he can use a borrowed arrow and turn the carcass over to the owner as a sign that he is reforming his ways.

In societies where the hunter is given rights over distribution, extreme modesty is enforced. The !Kung provide an excellent example: when a hunter is successful, he does not stride into camp and announce his kill, but leaves the carcass in the bush, slips in from the back of the hut, and sits unobtrusively by his fire. Others approach him and ask if he has seen any animals during his hunt. Even if his kill is large, he replies that he saw nothing of consequence while out hunting or that he killed only a small, scrawny antelope. After low-key discussion, during which people display intense or even negativity at the news of a kill, the meat is fetched for distribution. If the hunter is perceived as arrogant, the meat is insulted and his efforts are belittled (see Lee 1984 for a particularly good description). Among the Hadza, the successful hunter exercises similar restraint upon his return to the camp, sits down quietly, and “allows the blood on the shaft to speak for him” (Woodburn 1982: 440). A successful Mbuti hunter speaks little of the kill or not at all and lets others give the details of the hunt (Harako 1981: 536). Similar modesty is imposed on the good hunter among the Guayaki, who is called “a man of good luck,” (Clastres 1972), not a man of skill. Lothrop (1928: 422) gives the following description of the behavior of a successful Ona hunter:

Returning to his windbreak, the hunter would silently hand his bow to his wife to hang up and throw the meat on the ground near the fire or hang it on a tree. No one would pay attention to it, for it was considered bad manners to show elation at the success of the hunt or merriment at the prospect of food. After sitting around in a sullen silence for half an hour, the hunter would casually ask his wife why she did not cook some meat, and she would then do so. But until given leave she would not touch the meat, as it was his, but not her property.

The Meat Distribution

During the actual meat distribution the process of reversing the debt begins, that is, rather than allowing the hunter to place recipients in debt to him, efforts are made to downplay the hunter’s merit and emphasize his duty to provide meat for others. For example, the belief that hunting success is an acceptance on the part of the game to let itself be captured (Downs 1966; Henry 1941; Robbe 1989; Saladin d’Anglure 1978; Sharp 1988), particularly by men who are generous in sharing, is widely held among foragers of North and South America and the Arctic. The Ammassalik Inuit say that each man is born with the quota of animals that he will kill in his life attached to him. Not every hunter, however, accepts this fate, and in the past murders have been committed or sorcery practiced to try to expropriate the quota of another (Robbe 1989: 370). The Hadza say that meat is “God’s meat”, to be brought back to the camp and shared by all (Barnard and Woodburn 1988: 18), and the Jahai consider whatever they procure in the forest to be gifts from the ancestors (van der Shuyd 1993: 25). Attempts to avoid a sense of debt to the hunter are also evident in linguistic terms. The Aka Pygmies call what is received during sharing that “person’s due” (Bahuchet 1990:
The Federal Reserve System is composed of 12 regional branches and the Board of Governors. Each branch has a president and 2 vice presidents, and each branch is headed by a governor. The Board of Governors consists of 7 members appointed by the President with the advice and consent of the Senate. The Federal Reserve System is responsible for setting monetary policy and regulating the money supply. The Federal Reserve Bank of New York plays a central role in the system, with its headquarters in Manhattan. The system was established by the Federal Reserve Act of 1913 to promote economic stability and provide a safer and more efficient monetary system.
successful G/wi hunter, with or without his hunting partner, may decide to hold a men’s feast (Silberbauer 1981a, 1981b). He issues invitations, and on the afternoon after the kill is made, the invited men gather to receive cooked pieces of meat. Toward the end of the feast, an enjoyable social occasion, families appear on the outskirts, and each guest is given a portion of raw meat to pass on to his family. When men’s feasts are not held, raw meat is distributed directly by the owner or a senior man to fit household needs. Then second and third waves of sharing take place. The Hadza also hold a feast for initiated men, sending the rest of the carcass, “people’s meat”, to the camp, where shares are given to anybody who asks for them. Pregnant women are given priority. The Iglulik Inuit share village-wide and/or distribute meat as gifts. Among the Chipewyan (Sharp 1981: 238-39) to request meat degrades a man’s reputation and thus is done via women:

... Since food procurement is, publicly, a male activity, any borrowing that males do (if it goes outside the boundaries of the restricted cognatic descent group) weighs heavily upon their reputation for power/knowledge. This is reflected in the preemptive claim men have over foodstuffs and the tendency to give ostentatiously far more than they are asked for. No matter how skilled the hunter, there are times when there is not enough food...

Borrowing, or rather the necessity to borrow, is in direct contravention of the symbolic values placed on males, since they are supposed to be competent and complete providers. By making this something that women do, and hence not really of notice, the public system and the male’s position can be preserved...

... The wife of a hunter receives a steady stream of visitors, each chatting for a while with the wife and other visitors, who await a piece of meat before starting home. If the pieces given are large they may be divided again at the woman’s home and given to her female kin. Somehow the man who killed the animal seems to lurk, visibly but inconspicuously, in the background while the meat is shared.

As in the Chipewyan case, many foragers remove the hunter from the focus of attention during the second or third waves of the meat distribution either by delivering portions of meat via children or by handing the distribution over to the women (Damas 1972; Gusinde 1931: 398; Kaplan 1983: 57-68; Robbe 1989: 410; van der Sijs 1993).

The three waves of sharing thus create numerous donors and distribute gratitude for generosity over many in the exchange network. People are not only pleased with the hunters, but with all others who share with them. In the second and particularly in the third wave of distribution, women have considerable say over where the meat goes.

After the meat has gone through two or three waves of sharing, it is reasonable to ask what the hunter and his family gets out of it. The answer for most societies is “no more than an equal share”, as can be seen in Figure 10.5. In only three out of twenty-five societies does the hunter get a greater share or preferred parts, and, for the Bihor, only in the case of net hunting. Although Pygmy, Agta, Bihor, and Batek hunters set aside portions of meat to trade with neighboring agriculturalists, the returns for these also are usually shared. In fifteen societies, the hunter gets a share that is roughly equal to that of other camp members, and usually the skin of the animal as well. In three, hunters get inferior shares, and in another four, the hunter is not allowed to partake of the meat from animals that he killed. As Castles (1972: 168) explains for the Guayaki, this practice creates a total reciprocal interdependence of families: the hunter spends his life hunting for others, and others spend their lives hunting for him. Just as hunters in most foraging societies can not expect to get a greater than average proportion of their own kill, when others make kills, the former donors also can expect little more than an equal share.

**Figure 10.5 Shares of Meat Received by the Hunter**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preferred parts or greater share of the kill</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inuit of Quebec</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bihor (in net hunting)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chipewyan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hunter receives share approximately equal to that of other group members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washo (adult men)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netalik Inuit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copper Inuit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andamanese (distribution with respect to age)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mbuis Pygmies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fanti</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gunwinga</td>
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<tr>
<td>Batek</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hadza</td>
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<tr>
<td>G/wi</td>
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<td>I’Kung</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ona</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ammassalik</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jbali</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inferior parts or less meat than average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Desert</td>
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<tr>
<td>West Greenland Inuit</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ayoreode</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hunter not allowed to eat meat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guayaki/Ade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aka Pygmies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washo [unmarried men]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaingang (for pigs, only grown men can eat meat of tapirs that they have killed)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Insufficient information for Iglulik and Cree.
\[ \text{Discussion} \]
geared to cover daily, weekly or monthly variations as well as what
might be called the rare, definitive crunches – events that occur only
a few times in a lifetime but bring death or disaster – whether they
be caused by nutritional, medical or social/political factors. In soci-
eties with no storage, an extraordinarily wide range of risks must be
pooled over the long term through reciprocal relationships that have
very special conditions. The first condition is that the terms of the
relationship must be that he who has food, goods or valuables gives
to those in need, the need being relative to the means of both
(Sahlin 1972). Second, returns for gifts of assistance cannot be stip-
ulated by time, quantity or quality (Sahlin 1972) if they are to meet
a wide variety of needs. In other words, the giver has no desire to
receive an immediate and fixed return that would balance the rela-
tionship, but would rather wait for reciprocation until the situation of
“have” and “have not” is reversed.

Relationships that pool risk are ideally balanced over a lifetime, if
constantly controlled for cheating. For example, those who have
things of value but do not give are subject to social control through
gossip, ridicule or ostracism. Those who feel that they are being
exploited may cease to produce for a while and force others to do
their share. However, it is recognized that unpredictable events will
make some people unable to reciprocate adequately even in the best
of times, and, accordingly, a wide range of reciprocal ties are main-
tained so that people will win some times, lose other times, and
break even in most. A one-way flow of food or assistance over a long
period of time is mitigated by the fact that the cost of the assistance
is often small for the donor in relation to its value to the recipient: to
host a family in one’s camp and give it permission to forage on one’s
land for six months is little in comparison to the fact that this may
save the family from starvation. The irritations caused by a one-way
flow of goods or the effort of maintaining a relationship over a con-
siderable distance are not buffered by intellectual or economic
considerations, but by emotional ones; the determining factor in the
survival of relationships over time and distance is friendship and

Sharing of meat from successful hunts is only one aspect in this
broader system of reciprocal relationships to reduce risk, a system on
which every individual depends (Bahuchet 1990; Barnard and Wood-
burn 1988; Wiessner 1981). Any success in gaining status and con-
verting this to dominance that would allow certain individuals greater
access to natural or human resources, impose indebtedness or attain
authority is structurally incompatible with the terms of such social
means of risk reduction. Greater access to resources would make one

party permanently a “have” and the other a “have not”, requiring the
“have” to close himself off from exploitation. Inflicting a debt on
another destroys the loose terms of the relationship in which returns
are not stipulated by time, quantity or quality. Finally, relations of
dominance would adversely affect the emotional ties that are so crit-
ical to the maintenance of relationships over long periods of time.
Accordingly, the less productive people keep the status of the more
able or motivated people in check to prevent them from disrupting
the risk-sharing system that is so essential to their well-being. The
most productive, although economically able to break out of the sys-
tem in the short run (if not morally and emotionally), cannot afford to
do so in the longer run, a fact stated in many ethnographies.

In closing, it should be noted that the fierce equality enforced in
forager societies can pose an obstacle to current development, for
strong leadership from within greatly facilitates organization and the
power of a group to make its demands heard. It will continue to be
so until: (1) abundant resources are available that permit individuals
to cover risks through means other than pooling, such as storage
that reduces fluctuations in subsistence income and finances pay-
ments to deal with social or political problems (i.e. bridewealth or
compensation/fines) and (2) intergroup competition imposes a need
for organization and/or representation by a dominant leader. There
is, however, no reason to believe that status differences and more
pronounced leadership will not ultimately come about with social
and economic change, even though egalitarian ideologies stubbornly
resist. As the many leveling mechanisms in forager societies imply,
the tendency of individuals to seek status and influence is a current
that runs through all societies.

Notes

I would like to thank Bion Griffin, Volker von Bremen, Serge Bahuchet,
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ing additional information.

1. Numerous studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of sharing in reducing inter-
household variation in meat consumption (Bailey 1991; Kaplan et al. 1984, 1985a,
1985b; Griffin 1984; Smith 1988; Spech and Spielmann 1983; Tanaka 1980; Wiess-
ner 1989). The benefits of sharing, both nutritional and social, for the average
household have been established, although these may not always show up in short-
term studies (Hawkes 1993).
References


