

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-29561-1 - The !Kung San: Men, Women, and Work in a Foraging Society

Richard Borshay Lee

Table of Contents

[More information](#)

Contents

List of tables and figures	<i>page</i> xi
Preface	xvii
Note on orthography	xxv
Introduction: !Kung ecology and society	1
1. Fieldwork with the !Kung	8
The search for a field site: 1963	9
Early months at Dobe	11
Intensive fieldwork	12
Systematic data	14
Interlude: 1965–7	15
Dobe and /Xai/xai: 1967–9	16
Life at /Xai/xai	19
The /Du/da population	22
Expansion of the research group	23
Interlude: 1969–73	24
Return to Dobe: 1973	25
2. San, Bushman, Basarwa: a question of names	29
The Cape San	31
The Kalahari San	32
A guide to the contemporary San	35
3. The Dobe area: its peoples and their history	39
Counting the !Kung	42
The water holes	51
Living groups	54
The marginal population	72
The /Du/da population	73
A history of contact	76
	vii

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-29561-1 - The !Kung San: Men, Women, and Work in a Foraging Society

Richard Borshay Lee

Table of Contents

[More information](#)

viii

Contents

4. The environment	87
Topography	87
Vegetation associations	92
Fauna	96
Climate	103
5. Technology and the organization of production	116
The foraging mode of production	117
!Kung technology	119
Tools for obtaining water	120
Gathering and carrying tools	123
Hunting tools	128
Food-processing tools	151
Food storage	156
Tools and practices not found among the !Kung	157
6. An inventory of plant resources	158
The edible plants	159
A hierarchy of resources	167
Food classes and subsistence strategy	175
A regional geography of major plant foods	176
San–Tonga comparisons	180
7. The mongongo	182
Mongongo ecology and botany	182
Seasonality	188
An inventory of groves	190
Mongongo work	192
Camping in the groves	194
!Gi speech	195
Mongongo in the camp	195
Sharing and reciprocity	200
The nutritional contribution of mongongo to the diet	201
Have the San propagated the mongongo?	203
8. Hunting	205
The world of the hunter	206
The hunting process	207
Snaring	207
Mobile hunting	209
Finishing off, butchery, and carrying home	219
Kopela Maswe's warthog and other hunts	223
An inventory of prey species	226
The making of a hunter	235
Hunting and adulthood	240

<i>Contents</i>	ix
9. Men, women, and work	250
!Kung work defined	252
The 1964 work diary	254
Work effort and division of the work load	255
Meat and hunting returns	265
Input-output caloric levels	269
Other forms of work: manufacture, maintenance, and repair	272
Housework and overall work effort	277
10. The allocation of nutritional stress	281
Techniques and sample size	282
Body size, stature, and fat accumulation	285
Why are the !Kung so small?	287
Is there a hungry season?	292
Regional comparisons	302
Post-January recovery phase	306
11. Production and reproduction	309
The role of women in the !Kung economy	310
Women's work	313
Mobility, birth spacing, and population growth	317
!Kung birth spacing: a test of the hypothesis	320
Production and reproduction: the causal links	325
The emotional economy of reproduction	330
12. Ownership, leadership, and the use of space	333
N!ores	334
Named groups	340
Leadership	343
!Kung leadership in a contact setting	348
Flexibility in spatial organization	350
!Kung spatial organization	354
Hunter-gatherer comparisons	360
Contact and spatial organization: 1890 to 1969	361
Concentration and dispersion: a dialectic of organization and ecology	364
13. Conflict and violence	370
Levels of violence	371
Talking: arguments and verbal abuse	372
Fighting: hand to hand	376
Fighting with weapons	382
Analysis of homicides	387
Discussion	396

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-29561-1 - The !Kung San: Men, Women, and Work in a Foraging Society

Richard Borshay Lee

Table of Contents

[More information](#)

x

Contents

14. Economic and social change in the 1960s and 1970s	401
Improvements in hunting and gathering	403
Mafisa work on blacks' cattle	406
Transition to farming and herding	409
Contradictions between foraging and farming	412
Migrant labor, wage work, and penny capitalism	414
Schooling and land tenure	420
Basarwa development initiatives	424
The militarization of the San	428
15. The lessons of the !Kung	432
Uniformitarianism and Marxism	434
Abundant food and simple tools	437
Work load and weight loss	440
Demography and mobility	441
The dynamic of movement	443
Male-female relations	447
The social relations of production	454
Appendix A. Unraveling the Dobe population figures for 1964	462
Appendix B. Plants of the Dobe area	464
Appendix C. Mammals of the Dobe area	474
Appendix D. Major foods and nutritional assays	479
Appendix E. The hand-to-mouth existence: a note on the origin of human economy	489
Bibliography	495
Index	513