

**The Social Relationships of Changing Hai||om Hunter-
Gatherers in Northern Namibia, 1990-1994**

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Abstract

This thesis analyses the social relationships of a group of northern Hai||om, who also call themselves ǀAkhoe, in the Oshikoto region of Namibia. The Hai||om are a Khoisan-speaking group, labelled "Bushmen" or "San" by outsiders, who were dispossessed of their land during the colonial period. Today most Hai||om combine hunting, gathering, agriculture, handicrafts, wage labour, and cattle-keeping in a mixed economy. The Hai||om changing economy has elements of an immediate-return strategy aimed at gaining access to the delayed-return economies of neighbouring groups, particularly Owambo-speaking agropastoralists, and farmers of European origin.

Based on long-term participant observation with the Hai||om, this thesis shows the flexibility and versatility of Hai||om social organization and its institutions. Particular reference is made to the ways in which social categories are established on the basis of material transactions (sharing, gift-giving, bartering and commercial exchange), and are grounded in shared classifications of land and its resources. The thesis documents and analyses how Hai||om construct and maintain social relations, including relations with outsiders, in everyday social interaction. Patterns of Hai||om social practice involving these social relations emerge in language pragmatics, in the usage of space, and in ritual activities. The thesis also includes an analysis of representations of ethnic identity and economic difference in Hai||om folklore.

The investigation shows that Hai||om social relationships and social values continue to shape the diversity and overall flexibility that characterize Hai||om life today. Although Hai||om have little power to influence the conditions imposed on them by national and international contexts, Hai||om social strategies across changing conditions can be explained on the basis of a set of instituted social practices centred around open accessibility and informal common ground.

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Chapter One

Introduction: Cultural Diversity and the Context of Social Relationships

Introduction

This chapter introduces the subject of my thesis, the Hai||om of northern Namibia, by following two complementary objectives. To begin with the chapter gives an overview of the problems of group identification, the area of research that has been selected, the number of people involved, past research on people who are classified together with the Hai||om, the current socio-economic conditions in Namibia, and the diversity of cultural styles found. At the same time, the chapter develops a critique of labelling, locating, counting, classifying and defining "the Hai||om" as devices for conceptualizing Hai||om social practice entirely from an external perspective. The outside evaluation of Hai||om and their ways of life is analyzed in the context of the appropriation of Hai||om land by the colonial state. It includes an investigation of early ethnological sources, with a focus on maps of southwestern Africa, as well as more recent developments in the course of Namibian nation-building. The objective is to show how ethnicity was forged in the colonial history of the country and how it continues to play a role today. The objective is also to outline how current conditions have influenced the initial settings for the approach taken in this thesis on social relationships among Hai||om as well as between Hai||om and their neighbours.

Labelling the Hai||om

"The Owambo call us 'Kwankala' and sometimes 'Xwagga', the Boers call us 'Bosman, dom Bosman', and the Damara say 'Saab ge' (He is a San). But we do not like these names. 'Hai||om' is a name given to us by the Nama, and 'ǀAkhoe' is the name that was given to us by God. These are good names."¹

ǀNoa||khoab, a ǀAkhoe man at Mangetti-West, expresses in this statement the acute awareness many Hai||om have about the ways in which other people talk about them and the ways in which derogatory labels are used. More fundamentally, it also indicates that Hai||om in independent Namibia - like most people around the world - still live in a setting in which social categories are largely defined on ethnic grounds. Hai||om are identified by their neighbours in ethnic terms and they themselves use ethnonyms, though usually not in the same derogatory manner, when referring to other groups of people.

ǀNoa||khoab and most people I worked with considered "Hai||om" and "ǀAkhoe" to be synonyms and equally suitable, but it turned out that south of Mangetti-West many Hai||om did not use or even know the term "ǀAkhoe" which was limited to areas of the north (see map 1.2). In this thesis I therefore use "ǀAkhoe" only in the more narrow sense when talking about those Hai||om who live north of the Omuramba Owambo (or stem from this area) in an area that was declared part of the Owambo communal area before Namibian independence.

"ǀNabe", the Hai||om term used for the neighbouring Owambo

¹In this thesis I only employ the terms "Bushman", "Kwankala" and "San" when quoting the public discourse in which these terms are used to cover groups who prefer to call themselves Hai||om, !Xû, Juǀ'hoan, Nharo or by other autonyms. Consequently, I use these terms in quotation marks only. Designators that are not ethnonyms are given in italics and with small initial letters. Names of Hai||om subgroups are given in italics with capital initial letters. Throughout this thesis Hai||om terms are given in italics followed by an English gloss in parenthesis.

agropastoralists, is sometimes expanded to incorporate other Bantu-speaking people such as Kavango or Herero but is mostly used in its narrower sense. Sometimes it is divided further into the "Dama" (Ndonga) and "ǀNani" (Kwanyama) subgroups. In a similar fashion "Buru" (Boer, Afrikaner) and "Duistri" (German) are considered subdivisions of *!urikhoen* (lit. white people). Since both German- and Afrikaans-speaking farmers are the owners of the farmland south of Mangetti-West they are often referred to as *ǀhonkhoen*, a term for "boss" that is often used as an ethnic label. Whites may also be contrasted with *ǀnukhoen* (lit. black people) which, depending on the contrast that is drawn, can cover all non-whites including even the Nama (Khoisan pastoralists in the south of Namibia), the *!Kung* (neighbouring Khoisan hunter-gatherers) and the Haiǁom themselves. In most cases, however, the term is more narrowly applied as a name, "ǀNukhoe", to denote Damara (a group of neighbouring black Khoisan-speakers). It often replaces the common name "Xaudama" (*xau* lit. shit) for Damara in the presence of a Damara person in order to avoid a pejorative connotation. On the whole Haiǁom showed little interest in the etymologies of names but were concerned about the negative connotation a name can take on in address. "Kwankala" may have a harmless etymology (Williams 1992:85-6) but it is used as a term for "poor people" generally. The same is true for "San" in Khoekhoe languages such as Damara and Nama.²

²There has been considerable debate about the etymologies of these words and the implications for using one or the other, especially with regard to the identification of populations mentioned in historical documents (cf. Böeseken 1972, Elphick 1974, Böeseken 1974, Elphick 1975, Böeseken 1975). Until the 19th century the Khoekhoe term "San" and the English term "Bushman", and its Afrikaans/Dutch precursor "Bosman", were used to denote any person following a hunting and gathering or an outlaw lifestyle. In the recent past these terms have become established as ethnic labels often with negative connotations (see Guenther 1986a). The Owambo term "Kwankala" can denote both a poor person or a member of an ethnic group, while "Xwagga" is clearly limited to denote a Haiǁom person. At present all of these terms are applied as ethnic labels without any reference to or awareness of the etymologies that have been suggested in the literature. The term "Basarwa" is not commonly used in Namibia.

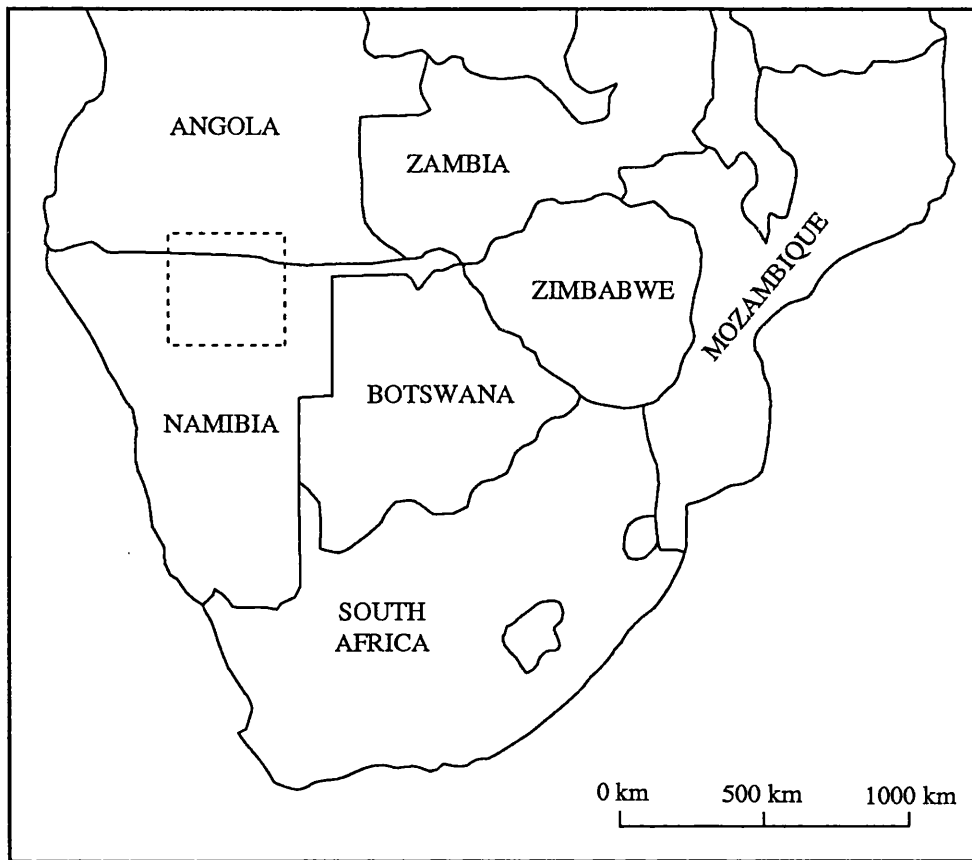
"Bosman" and its English equivalent "Bushman" is not disliked by Hai||om because of its etymology but because it usually goes together with negative attributes such as *dom* (stupid). Hai||om are unlikely to object on principle when referred to as "San", the term that has been adopted in official discourse of the Namibian government, of development agencies and of most of the Namibian press, as long as it is not used pejoratively or to disadvantage them.

Since the categories "Bushman" and "San" have played a major role in the southern African history of social engineering and continue to be used on the level of national politics, anthropologists, too, will continue to be confronted with them. There are indications that the tightening up of the land question in Namibia as well as the internationalization of contact between "indigenous minority groups" (see minutes of the "Regional Conference on Development Programmes for Africa's San Populations 1992" [MLRR n.d.] and of the "Aboriginal Saami and San meeting in Namibia" 1993 [NNDF n.d.]) may strengthen and substantiate a "San" identity that a few years ago was mainly a matter of designation from the outside and secondary with regard to people's self-identification (Barnard 1988:18). In the course of this development it is possible that in the future Hai||om, Nharo, Ju|'hoan and others may want to be referred to as "San" in certain political contexts.

Locating and Counting the Hai||om

None of the maps dating from the colonial period of southwestern Africa refer to "≡Akhoe", only some mention "Hai||om" and the majority refer to "Bushmen" instead without differentiating further. Those that do, place "Hai||om" at various places over a fairly large area of the northern centre of what is today Namibia (see maps 1.1 and 1.2). The "German war map" of 1904 places "Heikum" and "Haiumga" in the north-east of Grootfontein with "Kung" further to the north and east (Namibia National Archive 1987).

Another map from the late German colonial period (Namibia National Archive n.d.) has "Hei-gum" written over a stretch of land north of the Omuramba Owambo, a river that, like almost all rivers in Namibia, remains



Map 1.1 Southern Africa and area of research (see map 1.2 for inset)

dry in most years. It is this area that became my main area of field research. My most intensive field research was done with local groups who identify themselves as \neq Akhoe. They are located in an area roughly demarcated by the farms along the Omuramba Owambo in the south, and Okongo in the north, by the Kavango border to the east and the Tsumeb-Ondangwa road in the west (see map 1.2). Within this area my main field research sites were Mangetti-West and around \neq Gîseb (also called "Kotjolo" or "Otjolo" on maps). The core area of \neq Akhoe settlement extends over some 10,000 square kilometres between 17° and 18° eastern longitude and between 17°45' and 18°45' southern latitude. The larger Hai||om settlement area expands further to the south and east.

The area of my research as well as the whole area occupied by Hai||om from the beginning of the colonial period is effectively divided into two parts. This is a consequence of the establishment of the "red line" which defined the Police Zone in the German colonial period. During the period of South African administration the "red line" continued to separate land held by white settlers (mostly German- and Afrikaans-speaking) south of the line from land held by black agropastoralists north of the line. The "communal areas" to the north were allocated to speakers of the Owambo and Kavango languages since Hai||om and other "Bushmen" living in this area were not treated as people holding land. After Namibia gained its independence in 1990 the "red line" has continued to exist as a veterinary disease control measure, the implications of which I will discuss in more detail below. The whole area is sparsely populated. The last census report for 1991 recorded 1684 "Bushmen" in the Ondangwa district to the north (compared to 1149 in 1981) and 3838 in the Tsumeb district to the south (compared to 3506 in 1981) (cf. South West Africa 1981, National Planning Commission 1993). After the new delimitation of districts in Namibia a large part of these two

districts now forms the new Oshikoto region, in which the red line still divides the constituencies (subdistricts) of Guinas to the south from those of Engodi and Omuthiyagwiipundi in the north. Local political representation in this area continues to be exclusively in the hands of non-Hai||om. The councillors in all but one constituency (Guinas) of the Oshikoto region are Owambo. However, the influence of councillors on the situation in the rural areas remains small. On most privately owned farms non-Hai||om farmers can grant (or deny) Hai||om the right of residence.

The boundaries of the 1991 census districts maintained the pre-independence delimitation of 1981. The first national census after Namibian independence distinguished "Heikum", "Kung" and "Other Bushman languages" when recording the "Bushman languages" spoken but does not do so in the published results (National Planning Commission 1993:459-488). Note that while "Ndonga" and "Kwanyama" are linguistically correctly

grouped under "Wambo languages", as "German" and "Afrikaans" are grouped under "European languages", "Heikum", in terms of languages, should have been placed either separately or together with "Nama" and "Damara" and not under "Bushman (Saan) languages". This shows that the census was designed to be politically correct (that is to disregard ethnic identity) but at the same time to convey information about ethnic identity. If this is the case it is even more disturbing that "Bushmen" who identify themselves as neither Hai||om nor !Kung (for instance the large group of Kxoe speakers) were not counted as a group. The category "'Bushman languages' spoken" therefore needs to be read as "languages spoken by 'Bushmen'". Unfortunately, this covert recording of ethnic identity not only presupposes an unspecified "Bushman" identity but it also introduces a language bias since there are, for instance, Owambo-speaking Hai||om by self-identification.

The 1981 census recorded ethnic classification "according to [...] answers to the relevant question" (South West Africa 1981:2). But eyewitness accounts suggest that in many cases identification followed attribution by the enumerators (Marshall and Ritchie 1984:24). At the time of the 1981 and 1991 censuses "ethnic identity" was codified on identity cards (code "03" for "Bushman") which most Hai||om possess. In both cases enumerators may have been influenced by these identity cards in their classification. Although the constitution of the Republic of Namibia is explicitly directed against "the practice and ideology of apartheid" (Article 23) the category "language spoken" as presented in the 1991 census echoes the pre-independence ethnic differentiation including the category of "Bushman (Saan)".³

³Having witnessed the census being taken in the Hai||om area, I did not encounter anyone - even in very remote areas - who had not been counted. However, reservations about the reliability of the census data remain because of the communication problems between enumerator and enumerated with regard to all questions beyond the mere counting of heads. Hai||om responses with regard to name, occupation, age, household size as well as language spoken were in my experience frequently misrepresented as the

In my experience most of the "Bushmen" in the two districts identified themselves as Hai||om and a minority as !Xô. In the research area I had personal contact with more than 800 Hai||om. Intensive research involved 162 Hai||om in 12 camps in what used to be called the Owambo district and 233 individuals staying in the Mangetti-West area. According to local administrators, Tsintsabis and Fisa (Ombili Foundation), the two other large settlements in the area, had populations of 551 (less than half of them Hai||om) and 200 (ca 120 Hai||om) respectively. I also worked with the Hai||om speakers of these settlements. In my population survey I did not include all the other Hai||om I had contact with in the so-called Owambo area west of 17° eastern longitude and on the farms of what used to be called the Tsumeb district. Except when working in settlements outside the privately owned farms, I had to restrict myself to working on the farms to which I was granted access. For the two areas mentioned above, gaining this access was often problematic especially with regard to Owambo and Afrikaans landlords. German-speaking commercial farmers were more cooperative because of my own ethnic origin but in some cases were still suspicious about any research done by an outsider.

The cross-section of Hai||om with whom I worked during my field research is therefore only a fraction of the total "Bushman" population of Namibia (1981: 29443; 1991: 27229). Compared with the other census districts it appears that the Ondangwa and Tsumeb districts are home to more than a tenth of Namibia's "Bushman" population and that they form part of the core area of Hai||om population, if its most northeasterly extension. With regard to the overall population, "Bushmen" are a minority nationally as well as regionally. They form 1.93% of the total population (2.85% in 1981) on a national level, 17.00% (18.03% in 1981) in the

enumerator tried to match them with the questions and answer categories given on the census forms.

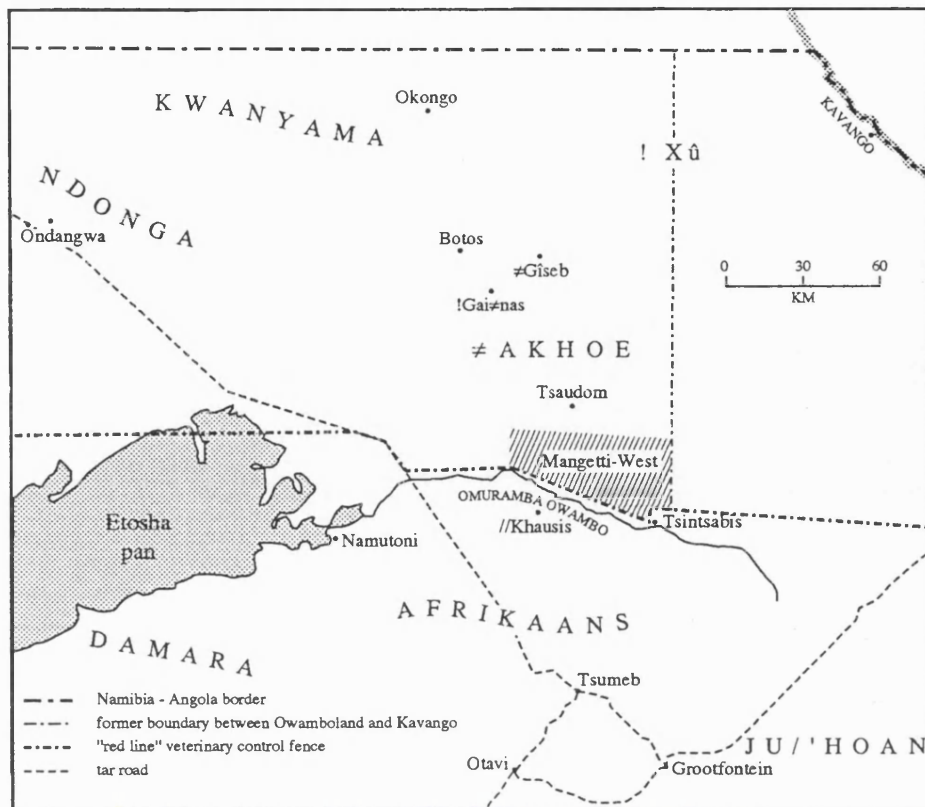
Tsumeb district and 0.72% (0.90% in 1981) in the Ondangwa district.⁴

However on a local level, that is, on farms and rural settlements, Hai||om often form the majority group. According to the 1991 census reports only some 0.20% of "Bushmen" live in urban areas (the 1981 census gives the "Bushman" population of Ondangwa and Tsumeb as "0" and "147" respectively). These low figures are at least in part due to the restrictive policy of the past that gave little opportunity for unemployed people to settle in towns. However, this figure indicates by implication the extent to which Hai||om are excluded from more qualified and better paid work in the towns and how removed they are from centres of political decision making as well as from education and health facilities. According to the 1991 census only 5.55% of all "San" had any school education and only 0.57% to secondary level.⁵

But even in the cases where they have a local majority, "Bushmen" are not legally or politically in control of the land they live on. With the exception of a small group of Ju|'hoan in eastern "Bushmanland" and, since independence, Kxoe at government "resettlement" areas in western "Bushmanland" and in the Caprivi, "Bushman" land has been allocated to other ethnic groups. The areas mentioned are far removed from the land occupied by Hai||om and, except for a small number of individuals, Hai||om have not benefited from these land allocations. For Hai||om and many other "Bushmen" this has not changed since independence since they do not have

⁴The apparent decline in "Bushman" population may be an effect of the way in which the census was designed and carried out as shown above. The decrease in terms of proportion of the overall population may also be related to the large influx of non-Hai||om (especially Owambo) Namibians returning from exile after independence. As the absolute figures for the two census districts show, the Hai||om population seems to be growing and shows no sign of dying out.

⁵Although in my experience people are more reluctant to identify themselves as Hai||om in towns than in the rural areas they cannot easily gain recognition by others as members of another group, say, Damara or Owambo. Here, physical characteristics such as small stature and light skin often come in.



Map 1.2 Northern Namibia and field sites

the means to purchase commercial land nor do they have enough influence on the dominant ethnic groups in charge of the "communal" areas to be formally allocated land on which they are allowed to stay.

The situation of ≠Akhoe in the research area represents that of a large number of Hai||om in northern Namibia. Neither north nor south of the red line do Hai||om (nor most other "San") hold any legal title to land. They live as landless farm workers on farms in the "commercial" south or in association with Owambo agropastoralist landlords in the "communal" north. This situation is partly mirrored in the way "Bushmen" have been represented on maps. While areas occupied by Owambo and other "non-Bushmen" are given territorial boundaries, the word "Bushmen" is in most cases more or less loosely put in the remaining blank areas. A pre-independence atlas of Namibia (from 1983) maps "Bushmen" onto a delineation of the "precolonial occupation" by hatching the areas between coloured patches for Nama, Damara, Owambo and Herero groups (van der

Merwe 1983:map 30). In another instance (in a volume directed against the pre-independence administration) all population groups are granted clearly demarcated territories while "Bushmen" are represented by a "B" between these territories (Nachtwei 1976:23). On the maps of the Odendaal Commission and on most later maps of South West Africa under South African rule "Bushmanland" (east of Grootfontein, bordering with Botswana) becomes a fixed district as part of the implementation of South Africa's homeland policy (cf. South Africa 1964). This created a situation whereby, according to census figures, only 7.62% of all people classified as "Bushman" were living in "Bushmanland" while the large majority found themselves living in areas that were designated for other ethnic groups, for "nature conservation" or for commercial farming. By 1991 this figure had risen to 12.30% which points not only to methodological problems with census data but with its directive nature. Through state action (resettlement, army presence) the number of "San" resident in "Bushmanland" was increased. The 1981 census report applies two distinctive features, firstly the official ethnic identification and secondly a specification of the available labour force into "active" and "looking for work" and thereby exhibits the directive of organizing the labour market. Another report from the same period has a separate map showing the Hai||om population but is limited exclusively to the farms, omitting any "Bushmen" living in communal areas of the north (Marais et al. 1984:map 2472/2). The directionality of maps and figures seems to be an important feature, particularly in the case of estimates on the number of "San" in the country. For instance, Budack's estimate of 11,000 Hai||om in Namibia (10,000 according to Swanepoel) must be seen in the context of the solicitation for a Hai||om reserve, the "Hai||om problem" as he called it (cf. Budack 1980:parts 9 and 10, Swanepoel n.d.).

"Bushmanland" is a great distance away from the area occupied by Hai||om speakers who were among the prime victims of the apartheid land policy and Budack quotes a Hai||om representative of the "Original Party of Namibia" who said, "We were not even on the map of this country." (Budack 1981:part 31), that is, the political map of apartheid. The apartheid

doctrine not only discriminated by prescribing and cementing differences but also discriminated by failing to recognize those differences between social groups that did not conform to the overall political strategy. This political strategy did not protect weak minorities, as was sometimes claimed, but served instead to affirm the hegemony of those in power.

Is it inevitable then that maps with representations of "Bushmen" (or similar minority groups) turn, in the hands of the state, into tools "for legitimizing territorial conquest, economic exploitation, and cultural imperialism" (see Monmonier 1991:90)? As Gordon has shown, a comparison of maps can show the territorial dispossession of "Bushmen", in this case between 1937 and 1980 (Gordon 1992:99). A map of Ju|'hoan waterpoints (*n!ores*) surveyed in the Nyae Nyae area became a crucial tool in the campaign of the Nyae Nyae Development Foundation for Ju|'hoan land claims (see Bieseke et al. 1991:annexure 3). But still there is a tendency for maps - and figures - to lend themselves to oppressive usage when used in isolation or in a context in which, for example, hunting and gathering is not recognized as a legitimate form of land use. With regard to the relation between hunter-gatherers and the state such a context seems to be the rule rather than the exception. Here, maps and census reports are related strategies. They not only serve to document but are also frequently used to channelize ethnic identity and to administer external control. Local occupants of the land appear as *quantités négligeables* in large overall population figures. Mapping subsistence against the background of an agropastoralist ideology distorts the picture. As my analysis of census figures has shown, masked or covert ethnicity may be as dangerous as open ethnicity in this respect.

When dealing with government and non-governmental agencies during my research between 1990 and 1994 the information most wanted related to the number and the location of "San" groups but, at the same time, there was a strong reluctance to consider the social implications of ethnic identity and its attribution. As in the earlier history this did not lead to Hai||om being granted control over land and its resources but it perpetuated

external control. In the public discourse, including that of "development" work since independence, counting and mapping were treated as external and therefore objective measures to achieve knowledge. As has been shown for the "Hai||om" case, these external measurements use explicit or implicit classifications that are often rejected by the people in question. These measurements also support the exertion of central control, often against the interests of the people concerned. Questions of classification have relevance far beyond academic discourse.

Classifying the Hai||om in Past Research

The power of maps and census reports works by classifying persons and places. The power classifications have on attitudes and actions goes beyond those aspects that can be spatially represented on maps. Anthropological analysis has largely focused on the creation and political abuse of the category "Bushman" (Marshall and Ritchie 1984:15, Wilmsen 1989:25, Gordon 1992:4). In the Hai||om case a further implicit classification combining geographical and ethnic factors is effective namely the fact that in most cases Hai||om are not counted as "Kalahari Bushmen".

Although the ≠Akhoe settlement area as described above is relatively far removed from the area commonly labelled "Kalahari desert" it is nevertheless occasionally included as part of the "Kalahari Sandveld" as opposed to the more southwesterly "Karstveld" with less sandy soils and more arid vegetation (Moorsom 1982:13). Given the location of the major anthropological field research sites in the 1960s and 1970s, southern African hunter-gatherers were largely identified as Kalahari hunter-gatherers who in turn largely consisted of the !Kung and their immediate neighbours (see Lee and DeVore 1976). This geographical identification had immediate political repercussions at the Namibian Land Conference where the Damara representative claimed the title of "original people" for the Damara and "the yellow Bushmen of the Kalahari", implicitly fending off Hai||om and other

"Bushmen" (such as so-called "black" or "river Bushmen" [see Cashdan 1986] and their land claims based on aboriginality (Garoeb 1991:1). The combination of racial and geographical parameters was already practised by the early ethnographers such as Vedder who distinguished Hai||om from "real Bushmen from the Kalahari" (Vedder 1926:15; see also 1937:418) i.e. !Kung. He based this distinction on linguistic, racial and cultural considerations but explicitly not on their way of life and their hunting and gathering economy (cf. Vedder 1942:76). In physical stature, language and "customs" the Hai||om appeared to Vedder to be "somehow related to the Nama" (Vedder 1942:77), so much that he designated them with the Nama term (Saan) and identified them as the last and most northerly remnant of the "Saan" population at the Cape (cf. Vedder 1937:418).

Vedder reiterates speculations according to which most "Saan" had "disappeared" because they caused their own demise by coming into conflict with Nama cattle owners who exterminated them in the south (1942:76). According to other speculative accounts from as early as the beginning of the 18th century, the "San" of the Cape were former cattle owners, dispossessed by colonization (see Szalay 1986:258). In the first "Kalahari Debate" German-speaking ethnographers of opposed branches in the "kulturhistorische Schule" were divided on the issue of whether the "Bushmen" of the Kalahari were only the dislocated remnants ("secondary primitives") of a more complex original "Bushman" culture in the ecologically more fertile areas of the Cape (see Szalay 1986:257). There is a parallel, but also an inversion, here with regard to the more recent "Great Kalahari Debate" in that now the "isolationist" view is under attack by "integrationist" anthropologists who deny that the ecological adaptation of "Bushmen" in the Kalahari gives a representative picture of hunter-gatherers who at other times and in other places have been in many ways incorporated into wider economic relations.

However, between these two debates the understanding of how "Bushmen" are localized in the Kalahari has changed. While participants in the first "Kalahari debate" thought of "Bushmen" as retreating to previously

uninhabited desert regions, the point of departure (and conflict) for the more recent debate has been the assumption that central Kalahari "Bushmen" are the untouched centre of "San" culture. In both cases the resolution of the debate seems to lie in a better understanding of those "Bushpeople" outside the Kalahari and their relationships with agropastoralists (see Motzafi 1986, Bender and Morris 1988, Headland and Reid 1988, Kinahan 1991, Bird-David 1992).

The work of historians has disproved many of the speculations put forward in the course of the first Kalahari debate. In this context the thesis of the "San" inability to acculturate has been criticized in detail by Szalay who showed that the "disappearance" of "San" at the Cape must be understood against the background of their incorporation into the population of Khoi and farm workers of mixed descent (cf. Szalay 1983:261; 1986:262). Given the fact that there also seems to be a process of "ethnolysis"⁶ in the north of Namibia where "Kwankala" ("Bushmen") have gradually "disappeared" from the Owambo settlement areas outside Ndonga, Ngandjera and Kwanyama (32 individuals in the 1981 census [South West Africa 1981]) which were previously home to many "Bushmen" (Lebzelter 1934:6-17), the question arises whether there are parallel processes at work.

As for the Cape context we rely on historical reconstructions of social processes. Marks (1972:59-60), Elphick (1985 [1977]:30), Szalay (1983:86-88) have depicted a Khoisan population at the time of European colonization that easily and frequently changed its ethnic identity between Khoekhoe and "San" as it gained or lost cattle.

Unlike Vedder who thought of ethnic identity as primordial and

⁶The dissolution of ethnic groups seems to me to require as much explanation as their "ethnogenesis". Both are only conceivable in situations in which one group identifies itself (or is identified) with reference to another. Both processes are likely to have internal as well as external causes, insofar as the internal/external division can be usefully applied.

based on race⁷ these historians pointed to the ascriptive and changing character of ethnicity. But given the limitations of historical sources and the particular interests of the historians, it is not surprising that, despite their scrutiny of archival sources, the analysis of social processes remains underexposed. Elphick criticizes the view that there was an "uninterrupted continuity between aboriginal and seventeenth-century hunter communities" (Elphick 1985 [1977]:30). He maintains, however, that when Khoekhoe first (that is, in the undocumented past) penetrated this region there was a clear dichotomy and that "physical and cultural hybridization" has occurred in a situation in which Khoisan switch between modes of subsistence (Elphick 1985 [1977]:41-2). Thus, the concept of "a society" or "a culture" as such has not become more dynamic but it is only that the boundaries between these units appear to be fluid in this particular historical constellation (see also Marks 1972:58). Historians such as Elphick and Marks also criticized the notion of a "substance" of ethnic identity beyond that of mutual ascription. However, partly because of the nature of the available documents, they maintained the allonym "San" which obscures the self-references of "San" people and their active manipulation of ethnic identity. An external bias is therefore perpetuated. Related to that is the fact that not only are Khoekhoe groups recognized their (named) subdivisions but also their positive aspirations; whereas the "San" were not given any positive characteristic that would distinguish them from cattle-less Khoekhoe (Marks 1972:57,70). Elphick's contention that a Cape hunter-gatherer could easily become a Khoekhoe since it is not necessary "to drop his own culture, only that he adds to it" (Elphick 1985 [1977]:42) underlines that "San" culture and society are defined in these analyses by a void and that they were still regarded as the object of external processes without recognizing constitutive internal processes. By implication this would apply even more to the

⁷See his adaptation of a tripart division of humankind into "Urrassen" (including the Bushmen), "Mischrasen" (including the Khoekhoe) and "herrsche Rassen" (including "Whites" and "Negroes") (Vedder 1926:6-7).

Hai||om and other "San" who spoke the Khoekhoe language "and thus could not be direct cultural descendants of aborigines" (Elphick 1985 [1977]:41, my emphasis). In this kind of analysis identity is reduced to culture (as externally defined) and, even further, to language. Both reductions seem unwarranted and misleading.

In sum, then, the description of an oscillation between Cape "San" and Khoekhoe is reminiscent of structural cycles like those described by Leach for Highland Burma (Leach 1964 [1954]). A major difference, however, lies in the fact that Leach's account to a large degree reflects the way in which Kachin themselves regard processes of centralization and dispersal while the "San"-"Khoekhoe" oscillation relies largely on reports of ascribed status. Since we lack detailed ethnography from that period, it cannot be established with certainty whether substantial "switches" of whole groups have occurred or whether we are in fact dealing with an oscillation of labels. Nor is there any information available about what the social predisposition and the implications of such a switch were.

Given these shortcomings, an analysis of Hai||om relations with neighbouring farmers and agropastoralists must look particularly at how they themselves perceive and express their position in this relationship. It has to bring together external conditions and internal definitions of social context. Furthermore, it must allow for the fact that the relations between Hai||om and their agropastoralist neighbours who are mostly Bantu-speaking Owambo take place in a different historical and social setting than that revealed by a study of historical documents.

Despite the surface similarities between the Hai||om situation and that of the Cape "San", Gordon has pointed out that we cannot, *pace* the speculations of the early ethnographers, assumed that the two historical situations are comparable and that they are generated by the same structures (cf. Gordon 1992:203, 263). In comparison to the Cape "San" situation in the 17th and 18th centuries, the Hai||om history of the 19th and early 20th centuries shows two important differences.

Firstly, although early ethnographers assume that Hai||om are a

"hybrid" between Nama pastoralists and !Xû foragers, there are no accounts of individuals or groups switching between these two identities. Rather, the perceived "mixed" features are extrapolated into a past process of mixture that lies beyond the historically documented period. The period of "mixture" is assumed to be preceded by a period of "pure" types and it is this assumption that generates the perception of "mixed" status in the first place. In historical accounts there are reports of small marauding Nama squads (the so-called Swartboois) in the area with whom "Bushmen" seem to have cooperated at times (see Rautanen diary 2.12.1888). However, there are no accounts of Khoekhoe pastoralist communities merging with the local "Bushman" population to form a mixed community. Today, there is no trace of groups of Khoekhoe pastoralists in the Hai||om settlement area apart from Damara with mostly small livestock who, certainly in the ≠Akhoe research area, have only recently settled here. Thus, in the remembered past, switching between identities defined by subsistence practices has not been part of Hai||om experience as a group.⁸

Secondly, records of the early expeditions of Europeans to the area focus on the relations between "Bushmen" and the Bantu-speaking agro-pastoralists in the area. The earliest reports about the Hai||om of northern Namibia described them as being heavily engaged in the regional trade networks for copper and salt (cf. Hahn 1859:301). Hai||om were seen as dressing like their Owambo neighbours and as having their own chiefs (Hahn Diary 7.7.1857 in Moritz 1980:25). With regard to the Owambo, their

⁸This does not exclude strategic individual manipulations of ethnic identity, especially with regard to colonial authorities. There is enough anecdotal evidence to suggest that in previous decades many Hai||om in places like Tsumeb were "hiding" as Damara because it gave them a better deal with the local administration. Conversely, Damara-speaking people from Tsumeb and Grootfontein have claimed in the past (Marshall and Ritchie 1984:121), and also claim today, to be "Bushman" in order to gain residential rights in "Bushmanland". These individuals are often business men who, equipped with transport and capital, see "Bushmanland" as the market for the goods and services they offer. For a more detailed discussion of ethnic identity see chapter eight.

agropastoralist neighbours to the north, Schinz, on his 1891 map, wrote the words "tribute-paying Bushmen to the Ondonga" ("Ondonga tributzahlende Buschmänner") over the area which was then and still is today Hai||om country (cf. Schinz 1891). Unlike the Cape "San" case, the notion is not one of oscillation between two identities but rather a progressive extension of identity from that of "Bushman" to that of "subject to Owambo kings".

The strategies of categorizing Hai||om who had intensive interaction with neighbouring groups was to note them down as "bantuized" and "dependent" (Lebzelter 1934:10, 13), "naturalized" (Galton 1890:142) or "bastardized" (Swanpoel n.d.:1) without, however, documenting in any detail the social interaction between Hai||om and their agropastoralist neighbours. The discussions of changes in Hai||om identity and the identity of southern African hunter-gatherers more generally have lacked this kind of documentation.

The question of tribute was hotly disputed when it became the focus of court proceedings between the South West Africa Company and the descendants of the renowned game hunter Green. In an attempt to establish who held the legal title to a piece of land north-east of Grootfontein, the German colonial administration was presented with testimonies of missionaries, traders, and "natives" to prove either the subservience of the "Bushmen" to the expanding Herero pastoralists or their association with Owambo against the mostly hostile Herero.⁹ Green's family claimed that he had received that farm from the Herero pastoralists who were controlling the land. The South West Africa Company claimed that the Herero had no legitimate right to give away the land in question because it did not belong to them but to the sphere of influence of the Owambo kings. In order to establish which of the two groups was the legitimate landlord and had the right to give away the land, the question was raised as to who controlled the

⁹The court proceedings from which I quote in this section are filed as the Leinhos case of 1909-1915 in the National Archive of Namibia in Windhoek under GWI 361 056/04. Page numbers refer to these files which are numbered by pages (cf. Namibia National Archive 1909-15).

local "Bushmen" (most probably Hai||om and !Xô).

In 1911 the first hearings of farmers, missionaries and servicemen of the German "Schutztruppe" concluded that the area was part of the Herero sphere of interest and that copper exports to the Owambo did not necessarily imply a tribute relationship. The Finnish missionary Rautanen attested that the area did not belong to the Ndonga and that the local "Bushmen" were not using the copper as tribute but rather as a trade item (cf. also Rautanen diary 11.7.1886). Georg Hartmann, a cartographer who had travelled extensively in the area at the end of the 19th century, underlined the independence of "Bushman tribes" in the Otavi area as opposed to those living closer to the Owambo centres.¹⁰ The Otavi Bushmen (bearing Hai||om names) would allow Herero pastoralists to visit the area if it was to their own advantage but would also occasionally refuse them access to their land (p. 29-30). Hartmann himself had to "constantly pay presents" to the "Bushman chiefs" for being allowed to mine in the Otavi area (p. 31). According to the missionary Vedder, the Hai||om did not stop the advances of individual Owambo who brought cattle to the south near Tsumeb during the 19th century (p. 99). Major von François maintained that the "Bushmen" were completely independent (p. 180) and concluded that if the question of legal possession of the Grootfontein and Otavi areas had to be resolved, it had to be given to the "Haiumgo-Bushpeople" (note his use of the subjunctive) (p. 261, renumbered 42).

Whether or not the "Bushmen" in this area were indeed paying tribute to the Ndonga Owambo king and were subservient to him depends on the criteria applied. If occasional presents are regarded as "paying tribute" then the early explorers and missionaries could be said to have been paying tribute to the Owambo kings (see Hahn diary 28.7.1857 in Moritz 1980:38-40, Rautanen diary 8.3.1889, Galton 1890:130). Furthermore, gifts by the Owambo kings to "Kwankala" when seen in the context of other functions

¹⁰Elsewhere, Hartmann describes the relation between Owambo kings and the "Bushpeople" of the copper mines in the ambivalent terms of a "protective hegemony" ("Schutzherrschaft") (cf. Hartmann 1985:279).

granted to them in Owambo kingship (see Louw 1967:31) suggest that the kings were to some degree paying tribute to the original owners of the land. The early historical sources show that European observers have approached and interpreted the conditions in northern Namibia according to the background of European history of state taxation and tithes to nobility. In the historical record this shows in the inability to understand the diversity of gifts, payments and services that were exchanged between "Kwankala" and Bantu-speaking agropastoralists.

Clarifying the position of the "Bushmen" was, in any case, only a means of resolving the conflict between colonists dividing the land among themselves. The conflicting reports were interpreted as resulting from an overlap of Owambo and Herero interests in an area that was considered marginal with regard to their centres of power. No doubts were expressed about the independent ethnic identity of the "Bushmen" but nor was the possibility seriously considered that the land should be returned to them as the rightful owners. Thus, both arguments, that of "Bushman" independence and that of their dependence on Owambo, were instrumental in their progressive dispossession. Submission under tribute or even slave relations were used to justify interference, appropriation of land and "pacification" (see Brandmayr 1977 in this tradition). The independence of "Bushmen", who by definition had no land rights, helped to fend off claims by Herero or Owambo to the Otavi mines and adjoining areas. With regard to the Leinhos court case discussed above, the evidence was equivocal in this regard so that it was finally decided to allocate half the land to each of the represented parties (Green's descendant and the SWACO mining company).

The examples given show that the history of classifying Hai||om and other "San" is characterized by indifference to the ways in which Hai||om themselves take part in the construction of the context in which they develop their internal and external social relationships. To a large extent this is also true for the perspective of political economy in the administrative centres of contemporary Namibia.

Placing the Hai||om in the Context of Contemporary Namibia

The history of dispossession as outlined above has left the Hai||om with no legal title to any land in Namibia. In the initial phase of my field research in the central north of Namibia several weeks were committed to a survey of places that were reported to have a substantial Hai||om population. The area covered corresponds to a triangle on the map (see map 1.2) between Uutsathima in the north-west (mentioned by Louw 1967), Okongo in the north-east (mentioned by Auala et al. 1970 and described by Hynönen 1963, 1964 and Heikkinen 1984) and the farm ||Gaub in the Otavi highlands to the south (see Vedder 1937). The survey showed that there is a three-fold division of the land which the Hai||om live on. Firstly, "communal land", granted by the colonial rulers to the leaders of the Owambo ethnic group for allocations to individuals. Secondly, "commercial" farms which are privately owned by white settlers. And thirdly, state-used land not allocated to groups or individuals but managed largely by nature conservation administration, the armed forces and other state bodies. This division reflects the pre-independence national economy of Namibia but even in the fourth year of independence, and presumably for some time to come, this division remains the background against which land issues are discussed (see Adams and Werner 1990, TCCF 1992, and the proceedings of the National Conference on the Land Question in NEPRU 1991).

This threefold division creates a diversity of conditions under which Hai||om live. In order to gain an understanding of this diversity, the Mangetti area was selected as the first site for detailed field study because its location promised insight into aspects relating to a wide range of these conditions.¹¹ Since it was my aim to investigate patterns of Hai||om social

¹¹The practical aspects contributing to this decision were the fact that Mangetti could be reached at least partly without 4x4 transport, the fact that it has a permanent supply of drinking water, of basic foodstuffs and other supplies in its shop and even petrol, and that it provides regular means of communication with other places.



Plate 1.1 Hai||om looking at "Bushmen". Representatives to the National Land Conference visit the permanent exhibition of the National Museum in Windhoek, June 1991.



Plate 1.2 Discussing illegal fencing and rights to land in the Sanab area. The (then) Minister of Lands, Resettlement and Rehabilitation, Marco Hausiku with local headmen, church representatives, and the secretary of the Ndonga king.

practice across local frames, Mangetti was a promising locality. It has a population of Hai || om, Owambo and of Afrikaans/German farm managers, a prerequisite for a study of the social relations between Hai || om and their neighbours. At the same time, despite considerable fluctuations, it was the largest ≠Akhoe settlement (closely followed by Tsintsabis) at the time of my field research. Mangetti-West, or | Gomais as the Hai || om call it, is situated on the border between the commercial farming district in the south and the communal lands to the north. This border is commonly known as "the red line" which was originally drawn by the German colonial forces dividing the "police zone" allocated to white farmers and what later became "native homelands" under the Odendaal plan.¹¹ In 1972 the Mangetti-West farms were established by the First National Development Corporation (FNDC, better known by its Afrikaans acronym ENOK), a semi-state organization put up by the South African administrator to Namibia. In 1990 the red line was effectively moved from the south to the north of Mangetti-West which implied that FNDC cattle were also sold to the south and most extension services were granted to white farmers. During the years when FNDC was being established, the communal land north of Mangetti-West, i.e. the south-east of what used to be called "Owamboland", was turned into private farms also known as "Mangetti farms" among Owambo. During the last ten years ninety-seven privately and commercially run ranches (1,200 ha each) have been established on communal land (Adams and Werner 1990:144). Despite investigations into illegal preferential treatment of the Owambo leaseholders, this de facto privatization of communal land has not

¹¹The alterations made by the Odendaal Commission do not conceal their political motivations (cf. South Africa 1964). On previous maps the area of | Gomais is defined partly as state land and partly as belonging to the Kavango area, another projected "homeland". In order to enlarge the area of the most populous "homeland" Owambo the boundary was shifted from 17°30'E to 18°00'E and the state land disappeared. The red line, previously marked by the Omuramba Owambo (a mostly dry river) in this area, was moved slightly to the north and now marked by a cutline. Especially during the years of Namibia's war of independence this cutline also served as a control against SWAPO incursions from the north. Known as "Alpha cutline" it was guarded by army forces. These alterations show the central state control over the legal boundaries of the land occupied by the Hai || om. Plans were also made to use portions of the eastern half of so-called Owamboland for a new game reserve (for parallels in "Kavango" and "Bushmanland" see Marshall and Ritchie 1984 and J. Marshall 1985).

been reversed.¹³ A similar development has taken place further to the east where the FNDC enterprise "Kavango Beesters" adjoins "Mangetti-West". The so-called "ABC farms" north of "Kavango Beesters" are private enclosures of Kavango communal land.

The gradual commercialization of "communal" and "state-owned" land also affected the Etosha nature reserve. A description of the situation in Etosha just after World War II (published in a popular account some decades later) says that "the Bushmen [...] are officially regarded as part of the preserved nature. They may hunt in the old way with bow and arrow. They are protected from external influence and off and on they are given a zebra or blue wildebeest as the present from the administration" (de Klerk 1971:60). Shortly after this observation was originally made a commission report, compiled by J. Schoeman, an anthropologist and game warden at Etosha, recommended the eviction of Hai||om from the game reserve (cf. Schoeman n.d.[b]). In early 1954, all Hai||om were ordered to leave the reserve in order to become farm labourers on the farms to the south or, alternatively, to leave behind their livestock and to move to the communal land allocated to the Ongandjera Owambo in the north. Farmers were given permits to enter the nature reserve for the purpose of recruiting Bushman labour (Namibia National Archives 1954).

The report by the Native Commissioner of Owamboland on the expulsion procedures presents an overt example of state power over hunter-gatherers in the service of commercial interests and is worth quoting at some length. The order was issued to the Hai||om in the following terms:

"I have come here to tell you that it is the order of the Administration that you move out of Game Reserve No. 2 [Etosha]. The reason for this order is that you are destroying the game. You may go into the Police Zone and seek work on farms South [sic] of Windhoek, or elsewhere. [...] Those of you

¹³The final report of the Frank Commission of inquiry into alleged misappropriation of Government property and funds remains unpublished but some details have been reported in the Namibian press (see reports in Namibian newspapers in early 1992, for instance, in "The Windhoek Advertiser" 15.2.92).

who do not wish to go and work on farms must move into Ovamboland, but without your stock of any description. [...] You will have to be out of the Game Reserve on the 1st. May, 1954. If you are still in the Game Reserve on that day you will be arrested and will be put into gaol. You will be regarded as trespassers. [...] I hope you understand this message. If you have something to say I will listen but I wish to tell you that there is no appeal against this order. The only Bushmen who will be allowed to continue to live in the Game Reserve are those in the employ of the Game Wardens." (Namibia National Archives 1954)

The expulsion, officially justified by the protection of wild game (as a national good), meant that Hai||om were no longer allowed to forage or live in the reserve except as assistants to the game wardens or as servants of police households. Up to today all economic enterprises other than commercial tourism have been prohibited in this area. This action completed the appropriation of Hai||om land through eviction and through the seizure of the land as property for other population groups or in the "national interest".¹⁴

As for the Hai||om, this situation has not changed in the first four years of independence. Since independence in March 1990, and in some cases before that date, some commercial farms formerly owned by white settlers have been bought up by wealthy black farmers or by the government which has given them out as small plots, in this case to Damara-speaking owners of small stock. But the pattern of land ownership is also changing in the communal areas. Entrepreneurs in the communal area of Owambo have over the last three years fenced and thereby effectively privatized land in the "unoccupied" communal areas, including the last pockets of non-enclosed land occupied by Hai||om. Despite continual protests against these

¹⁴Interestingly, the expulsion followed not only the commission report but also a compassionate book by Schoeman. In the book he clearly supports "Bushman" claims to land rights but significantly describes how he facilitated the move of a Hai||om family from Etosha into the !Kung area to the east (probably to what later became "Bushmanland"). This is where the book ends with the words of a Hai||om man which he incorporates as follows: "[...] I was driven to hurry to Windhoek where I was to deliver the beseeching prayer of the 'Hunters of the Desert Land.'... 'Please give us a land of our own.... Bushman-land!'" (Schoeman 1957[1951]:161).

practices and submissions in favour of Hai||om land rights, no land at all has been granted to Hai||om anywhere in Namibia (see Widlok and Widlok 1992a, 1992b).

All transformations described have extended the commercial usage of land in one way or another, so that all Hai||om today are faced with non-Hai||om using Hai||om country commercially either for ranching or for tourism. Further commercialization is the prospect for the future. At the national land conference in Windhoek (June 1991) delegates from the communal areas wanted to see the "red line" abolished since they felt it excluded them from commercializing the produce of the land and the meat of their cattle. They also felt that it privileged the whites by providing them with a monopoly on commercialization. Following this conference only one technical committee was instituted, namely that on "commercial farmland". The third category, state land, together with parts of the "communal" and the "commercial" areas, is now regarded as "unused" or "underused" land (cf. TCCF 1992:29). Areas which are used seasonally for transhumant migration, by semi-state enterprises, or by foraging "San" groups is now suggested for resettlement of agropastoralists, mostly Herero and Owambo. The final privatization of Mangetti-West seems to be only a matter of time (see statements of Namibia's Minister of Agriculture in "the namibian" 11.2.92).

However, the division of land into "types" disguises complementary processes that have been at work for a long time. As we have seen, enclosures have gradually geared much of the "communal" land toward commercialization. On the other hand, political privileges and the enforcement of the red line have protected white pastoral enterprises from the competition and free movement of goods and labour that characterize commercialization. The "commercial farming" area was to some degree a "communal" area for the white population, where political power and coalitions secured privileged positions on a market that was never determined by liberalized market principles. In spite of their privileges "commercial farming" does not appear to have been very profitable and many white farmers only manage to keep their farms by taking paid

employment in the urban centres.

"Commercial" farming always relied on the "free" land, in terms of a reserve grazing ground but also in terms of land from which their labourers obtained free food. Wild food resources such as the mangetti nut at times provide the staple Hai||om food, relieving pressure on the commercial cattle industry to feed its labour force in lean times or to fully sustain its reproduction. White farmers in the area report that in times of drought and famine, for example, in the early 1930s, some farmers sent their workers off into the Mangetti area to find food to sustain themselves. Since the early days of farming in the area right up to the present, the Mangetti area has served as a source of labour from which the farmers to the south can draw seasonally. This is made possible by the primary use of mangetti as a highly nutritious staple food (see chapter two).

In sum, present-day rural Namibia is a highly commercialized setting which, however, has not yet made hunting and gathering impossible. They remain important components of a mixed subsistence economy. The commercialization has led to a situation in which the category "communal" is residual in that it may refer to different pursuits that are intertwined with more comprehensive commercial strategies. Subsistence agropastoralism as well as foraging can co-exist in one "communal" area. The distinction between "commercial" and "communal" areas no longer constitutes, if it ever did, a clearly demarcated spatial distinction. In most places aspects of "commercial" and "communal" economies are co-present and closely linked to each other.

Defining Hai||om Culture in Its Diversity

Despite the fact that commercialization is a feature of present-day Hai||om life, it does not affect all areas of everyday life in the same way and that it does not affect all individuals to the same extent, as the case of |Gomais shows.

Due to the abundance of the mangetti nut, | Gomaïs (Mangetti-West) has been a centre of Hai||om settlement for as long as oral history can recall. While the area was only seasonally occupied before the establishment of pumps (due to lack of surface water), it has been a permanent Hai||om settlement since the 1970s. A local census in 1979 listed over 300 "Bushmen" distributed across fifteen cattleposts. Its present high population of over 200 at the central cattlepost is a result of the recent war (roughly 1978 to 1989). Hai||om say that they were told by the South African Defence Force in their places of origin in the north that they should either associate themselves with army camps or leave those places and gather at | Gomaïs unless they wanted "to be shot together with SWAPO"¹⁵

However, since at least the beginning of this century Hai||om from the north, particularly men, have voluntarily stayed at | Gomaïs for certain periods, either to look for wives or to find work on the neighbouring farms. Furthermore, Hai||om have lived in such large aggregations before and continue to do so in other places. The Finnish mission centres that were started in the early 1960s at Okongo, Ekoka and other places in the north-eastern part of the Owambo region resemble in some ways the *reduções* in South America. The dispersed population was brought together at some central places and provided with facilities such as schools, churches, stores, and boreholes. Linguistic work with Hai||om and !Xû was started in the early 1970s by Terttu Heikkinen (Heikkinen 1987:1). When the mission centres were abandoned during the war, a large number of Hai||om (and

¹⁵The armed conflict between forces of the Republic of South Africa, which controlled Namibia from 1915 until 1989, and those of the South West Africa Peoples Organization (SWAPO) was largely carried out on Angolan territory. The communal areas to the north, including Owamboland, were declared "security zones" which served as a buffer zone between Angola and the areas of white settlement with a strong presence of South African counter-insurgency units in this area. Many Hai||om on the farms were incorporated in "commandos" (stand-by squads) on the commercial farms while a small number worked with SWAPO in Angola. Since independence in 1990, Namibia has had a democratically elected government with SWAPO as the majority party.

!Xû) either moved to the south or lived near army camps. In comparison to other "San" groups in other parts of Namibia, only a few Hai||om became regular soldiers with high salaries in local terms. Today there are two large service centres which were established for "development" purposes, one run by a private foundation, the other one by the Ministry of Lands, Resettlement and Rehabilitation. The Hai||om situation is different from that of Ju|'hoan in "Bushmanland" since, on the whole, the early experiences with these "service centres" were not as traumatic as in the case of Tsumkwe (see Marshall and Ritchie 1984).

At |Gomais today some 14 Hai||om men have found work with FNDC, doing livestock management, including fencing and pump maintenance. They are well paid in comparison with labourers on privately owned farms. One of the central differences with a private farm is that being a worker or part of a worker's core family is not a condition for staying at |Gomais. Thus, the number of people staying there and seeking benefits from those who receive wages is higher than on the private farms. But there are also other sources of income at |Gomais (see chapter two). Mangettis and a variety of other wild foods are available throughout the year. The church (Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia) operates a mission school at |Gomais which provides irregular food distributions. Finally, there are about 40 Owambo who distil and sell alcohol which is a potential source of income for some Hai||om and a source of social disruption for all of them. Gardening is limited with regard to the space available at the main cattlepost, because the area for use by the Hai||om is fenced in. The food return from the small gardens is very low. Gathering food either for own consumption or for sale to the Owambo takes up much more time than gardening.

The distribution of huts corresponds to the three groups of Hai||om living at |Gomais, differentiating themselves with regard to their places of origin: a group of about 100 people from about 70 kilometres north (the ≠Gîseb area), a second group from about 25 kilometres north-east (50 people), and a third group from places to the south or from Mangetti itself

(50 people). Those groups (including the workers) tend to build their huts in that part of the land available which is closest to the direction of their place of origin. Due to intermarriage and individual preferences and conflicts there are some exceptions to the rule. Most Hai||om at |Gomais regard it as their permanent dwelling place, and only a few seasonally move back to the north to work or gather wild fruit not available locally. While settlement is more or less permanent, this does not inhibit intra-camp movement. Reasons are manifold, but social conflict is often behind such moves. Out of eighty-nine huts and shelters recorded at |Gomais in 1990, all but sixteen had either been destroyed or moved in the course of one year.

The cattle outposts open another opportunity for movement in the case of social conflict or economic strain. Temporary camps are set up at these posts where people continue to enjoy some of the benefits of the service centre, such as easy access to clean water, transport and goods provided to the workers. A particular outpost may be chosen because the worker is a close relative or in-law (including Owambo men who live with Hai||om women) or because of a particular kind of wild food that is available there. These outposts are visited at all seasons, and the time spent at a post will vary from a few days to several months.

A casual but attentive visitor to |Gomais who is looking for the "typical cultural style" of the Hai||om will be either continually frustrated by the prevailing diversity or may abstract with some difficulty at least three "cultural styles" that prevail among the Hai||om of today. These styles are particularly manifest in material culture.

The Hai||om huts are of three quite different kinds: Firstly, a grass hut no higher than 1.5 metres and constructed within an hour by a couple of women; secondly, a hut constructed on a round or square set of wooden poles with a door and a firm thatched roof built in the course of several days usually by a young man who has learned this skill from neighbouring Owambo; thirdly, a rectangular hut constructed of corrugated iron, nails and tools provided by the employer to his wage labourers who usually assemble the walls and roof after work. These three hut styles may be identified as

Hai||om, Owambo and European but this only holds for the origins of these styles. Their distribution follows the social logic implied in the access to services and building materials. A Hai||om may have huts of different styles at different stages of his or her life and may at some stage have several huts in all three styles. Adolescent boys and girls who move out of their parents' hut usually do not have the skill or support to build anything but a grass hut. Similarly, the aged frequently live in grass huts unless they can ask young people (particularly sons-in-law and children) to help them with the construction of an Owambo-style hut. These huts are by far the most labour-intensive mode of housing, requiring the support of able men (to cut poles) and women (to collect sufficient grass) who are not engaged in wage labour and who have enough time to construct such a hut. At |Gomais there are able Hai||om men who have never stayed with Owambo for any prolonged period but who have learned how to construct these huts from fellow Hai||om. On the privately owned farms farmers often do not allow houses in this style to be built because of the large amount of grass that is needed. At |Gomais the construction of these huts was actively encouraged by visiting Owambo government officials who threatened that no food would be given to Hai||om without a proper i.e. an Owambo-style hut. Much less effort is required to build a hut with corrugated iron and from industrially produced materials. But these products are in short supply. A close association with a white employer is needed in order to obtain them. When moving to another farm, building materials such as corrugated iron are left behind. The farm manager gives the material to another worker who therefore cannot be regarded as its owner since he does not have the right to dispose of the material. Some building materials such as animal fodder bags or plastic sheets are sometimes available to non-workers and are freely combined with grass huts, Owambo-style huts or worker-style huts.

These three hut styles are typical for |Gomais and a standard inventory of contents relevant for food production, preparation and consumption includes bows and arrows (for men), digging sticks (for women), calabashes, mortar and axe (also used as pestle), as well as

industrially produced enamel mugs, spoons and glass bottles. Almost each hut has a fire at its entrance which may have been lit by getting a piece of burning wood from the nearest neighbour, by using a homemade tonteldoos (a tinder-box operated with an iron and a piece of dried fungus), or by using matches or a (petrol) lighter. The food prepared on that fire may consist of |*aru-e* (wild potatoes) collected in the bush, millet from a local garden, maize meal from the local shop, or beans distributed by the World Food Programme. The occupants of these huts may be dressed in rags, in army dress or in clothes from the local shop. The T-shirts worn may praise SWAPO (the government party), or say "Viva DTA" (the leading opposition party), or may be too dirty to recognize the political party which distributed them. They may swear in German or Afrikaans, imitate the radio in English, mimic the Owambo-speaking evangelist and tell jokes in Hai||om. They may also sing South African disco music to tapes, Oshiwambo pastoral songs, or they may chant songs associated with the Hai||om medicine dance. The musical instruments they know how to make and play may be a *xaraxaras* (musical bow) or a *gaukhas* (five stringed pluriarc) also known to the !Kung (Marshall 1969:359), or may also be the Owambo *ombulumbumba*, a Kavango drum, or a *fiol* (fiddle) or guitar used for "Boere musiek". Not everybody at |Gomais knows how to make or play these instruments but everybody is familiar with them. These various elements of material culture, most of which can be traced back to one of the three "cultural sources", are freely drawn upon and combined by the Hai||om in any way that seems convenient or appropriate at the time. But cultural diversity may also be seen in other features of Hai||om life such as music or names. Parallel with the way in which they deal with material culture from different sources, Hai||om are also untroubled by combining different cultural styles in domains that take less material form.

The same individual may at different times identify himself as Xareb (a Hai||om name), Vilho (an Owambo name), Samuel (a church name) or Manniki (an Afrikaans name). Different cultural styles with different origins are intricately intertwined in everyday life. Individual Hai||om are

characterized by specific combinations of styles of dress, music, and language at particular points in time but |Gomais as a local group is characterized by the diversity of styles that are available to individuals or that are at least familiar to everybody. Just as commercial aspects have penetrated contexts outside the "commercial farming area", Hai||om, Owambo, or European cultural styles are not restricted by spatial nor rigid ethnic boundaries. At |Gomais the diversity of cultural styles illustrates how different socio-economic contexts affect Hai||om everyday life and how intertwined they are. Faced with similar conditions among changing hunter-gatherers elsewhere two, often opposed, strands of interpretation have emerged. The diversity in cultural styles is at times presented as the characteristic of a "hunter-gatherer" style (Kent forthcoming). This interpretation, benevolent as it is, begs the question as to how this "diversity style" is to be distinguished from any haphazardly generated diversity found in a random agglomeration of individuals. The other strand of interpretation is to take the diversity either as an indication that these are societies on the verge of breakdown and dissolution or that they never had a distinct "culture" to speak of. They may appear to be at the mercy of neighbouring cultures in a history of outside influences from centres that exhibit a unified cultural style. This accounts for the trajectory of isolated features within individual life histories such as the acquisition of consumer goods by farm workers, or "Owambo" instruments by Hai||om who have spent some time in the vicinity of Owambo settlements. However, it does not account for any social institutions that shape this process. Nor does it explain the particular patterns that emerge in diversity. But, above all, it neglects the implications



Plate 1.3 Aerial photograph of Hai||om huts at |Gomais (wet season, (February 1992). Note mangetti trees and gardens, Owambo-style huts (at the top), corrugated-iron huts (at the left), and grass-huts (center of photo).



Plate 1.4 Playing the *xaraxaras* (musical bow) using plastic packaging strips.

of the fact that hunter-gatherers like the Hai||om do have a sense of belonging to a distinct social group. Furthermore, any analysis based on cultural styles obscures the fact that despite continual dispossession, displacement, stigmatization, economic discrimination, and exclusion from political power, there is continuity in Hai||om social relationships across generations. Given the economic, political and often violent pressures under which Hai||om and other "San" groups have lived, the underlying social processes are sometimes overshadowed by the diversity of cultural styles that are often taken as visible signs of "cultural difference". It is the objective of this thesis to analyze present-day Hai||om social practice in terms of its underlying social processes. In order to do this, it is necessary to show that a classification into cultural styles or "cultures" does not provide an understanding of social processes, at least not in a situation that is characterized by a multiplicity of cultural styles. Rather, it must be shown how social practice generates the diversity of cultural styles that can be observed.

Both strands in the interpretation of diversity need to be taken into account. In a very basic sense the current situation is a product of the presence of other neighbouring social and cultural groups. Nor could it have come about without the flexibility that allows individuals to combine influences from a variety of sources. However, we can account for these factors and still avoid the limitations of the two interpretations mentioned if we recognize that the underlying social dynamics not only lead to a diversity of cultural styles but also to different ways of generating cultural styles. Therefore, my central interest in this thesis is to analyze Hai||om social practice, that is, their ways of dealing with cultural styles, the social processes (or "social styles" if the term is acceptable) that lead to the diversity in cultural manifestations.

Conclusion

In this chapter it has been shown that localizing, classifying and other forms of conceptualizing "the ≠Akhoe" or "the Hai||om" are problematic in that they have been part and parcel of strategies deriving from external centres to politically control and economically exploit Hai||om. As such, the forms that have been used to identify the Hai||om have, in part, created the context within which the Hai||om live at present. Thus, the ideas of the past are not only part of academic history but are a factor that needs to be recognized when analyzing the social condition of Hai||om today. Nevertheless, through this analysis of existing frames that have been used to identify them, the Hai||om have been situated not only in demographic and geographic terms but also with regard to the weave of political and economic interests that have shaped the existing documents, i.e official records, maps, and the early comparative ethnology.

The chapters that follow will rely on a different source for documenting and analyzing Hai||om social organization and identity. While labelling, locating, counting, classifying and historical positioning are attempts to define "the Hai||om" with regard to an externally defined social context, the following description of Hai||om ways of life attempts to understand the social context from the perspective of the social actors situated in practice. The method for achieving this objective is an analysis of the internal and external social relationships that Hai||om themselves construct, maintain and manage in interaction with each other and with members of other social groups. The aim is not simply to represent "the Hai||om perspective" but also to account for it, as far as it is accessible through anthropological field research. The aim is also to see how social relationships, once created, constitute the context for further social action

and in turn influence the Hai||om perspective on the world.

The hypothesis of this thesis is that it is social practice that directs cultural styles. It is a working hypothesis in the sense that it has enabled me to make sense of the situation I found myself in during field research. It also enabled me to organize my observations according to the parameters that condition Hai||om social practice. Chapter two gives an account of daily subsistence activities with an emphasis on patterns of social practice that emerge across the diversity of economic activities. Chapter three then looks at the social relationships and modes of transaction that constitute everyday social practice. The format of my analysis relies heavily on case histories, or, more precisely, "case situations" that capture situational motivations and exhibit at the same time the versatility of social institutions. Chapter four looks more closely at how this versatility is grounded in (and limited by) the categories used and shared by Hai||om in conceptualizing their social and natural environment. Focusing on a detailed study of salient cases of Hai||om language usage, chapter five investigates how shared values and categories are communicated and how language pragmatics themselves become a field for social interaction. Chapters six and seven, then, investigate the way in which spatial and ritual arrangements influence Hai||om social practice and the extent to which they are in turn characterized by Hai||om patterns of social interaction. Finally, chapter eight examines how Hai||om themselves represent their own identity and their relations to outsiders. Storytelling as the main medium of representation will be investigated in detail, but again, using a format which retains as much as possible of the actual context in which these representations are formulated. Throughout this thesis an attempt is made to show how continuity in Hai||om social style can be elicited from a detailed study of social practice in changing contexts. While focusing on Hai||om ethnography, this thesis is

also intended to contribute more generally to anthropological research on changing hunter-gatherer societies. Ultimately, I want to give a comprehensive picture of the Hai||om today in a methodological and theoretical frame provided by an exploratory anthropology of social practice.

Chapter Two

Subsistence Flexibility and Access to Resources

Introduction

"Gathering mangettis does not make your stomach full but it makes your back hurt. Mangettis do not satisfy you." This is a Hai||om answer to the !Kung question "Why should we plant, when there are so many mongongos [mangettis] in the world?" Hokorob, the Hai||om man whose answer I quote above, and |Xashe, the !Kung man quoted by Lee (1979:v), have never met. But the !Kung statement, better known than any other in the study of southern African hunter-gatherers, has proved to be so influential in scholarly writing that I could not resist putting it to my Hai||om informants to see what they would say.

Richard Lee chose his !Kung informant's rhetorical question as the motto for his ethnography (1979:v). And subsequently it has been cited so often that it has become a key phrase in a whole strand of scholarly writing that has emphasized the autonomy and relative affluence of "San" society. In Sahlins' words it became the "Bushman" response to "the neolithic question", their rejection of the neolithic revolution (1988 [1972]:27). When I asked Hai||om why they planted gardens when there were so many mangettis in the world, I repeatedly had to rephrase my question, not because Hai||om lack a term for world (*unis*) but because my interlocutors were not concerned about the state of mangettis "in the world". Rather, their views were informed by the relative abundance (or lack) of mangetti at the places where they lived and in relation to other subsistence options that were available to them there. In this chapter I am not suggesting that "the !Kung" and "the Hai||om" have two different answers to the question of subsistence that can be easily opposed to each other. Instead, I want to point to the fact that the choice for or against a subsistence strategy is not made in the abstract by a social group "behaving as if it were a mind writ large"

(Douglas 1987[1986]:45). Nor can all individual choices be understood as being determined by a social structure "writ small". Rather, I will look at the diversity of individual strategies as part of a larger process of social practice and analyze them as they develop in a specific social context and in the presence of other social actors.

As with all isolated quotations, the two statements quoted at the beginning only inadequately summarize the inner logic of the two situations. Lee's original question was in the context of planting mangetti trees as opposed to only harvesting them (1979:204). The contrast between planting something and planting nothing where mangettis are abundant was not drawn. It is unlikely therefore that |Xashe intended to say that they do not plant anything because there are many mangettis in the world. Neither the !Kung nor the Hai||om reject garden products as food. And the "neolithic" agriculturalists, despite their usage of wild fruits such as mangetti, show no intention of planting mangetti trees instead of crops.¹ My question why they wanted to plant with all these mangettis around I was put to Hai||om who were keen to have links to agriculturalists for obtaining garden products, for labour in the fields, and for extension services in their own gardening enterprises. Thus even if Hekorob and |Xashe had known each other, it seems to me unlikely that they would have questioned each other. The two responses appear more different than they actually are. Both respondents were defending the logic of their economic strategies. In this chapter I want to outline the logic of the Hai||om economy both on the systemic level and on the level of practice. I want to do this by pointing out how Hai||om strategies differ from those of other groups of southern African hunters and gatherers, in particular their best-known representatives, the !Kung².

¹Even professional botanists recommend an "increased utilization in the wild" for the mangetti tree rather than its domestication (Arnold, Wells and Wehmeyer 1985:74).

²In this thesis I refer to the "!Kung" as the group that was described by Marshall, Lee and other members of the Kalahari Research Group (Lee and DeVore 1976; see also Hitchcock 1986). These authors use the term "!Kung" (their spelling of !Xû) synonymously with the self-descriptor "Ju |'hoan" to

The preceding chapter has shown that the commercial/communal dichotomy does not adequately define the conditions under which Hai||om live today because it overgeneralizes the perspective of political and economic centres. Although the "commercial" and "communal" centres are marginal from a Hai||om perspective, Hai||om nevertheless draw economically from these centres. As I have shown, the fact that Hai||om live in an area from which several centres can be accessed (and which is in turn influenced by them) leads to a situation in which there is no single homogeneous cultural style. In the same vein this chapter will elaborate on the fact that Hai||om have a mixed and flexible economy that does not rely on a single all-encompassing mode of subsistence. The chapter will also try to show how the Hai||om way of life makes sense to those who practise it and how we can elicit the systematic properties of Hai||om economy and social organization while accounting for internal diversity.

Environmental Conditions and Environmental Knowledge

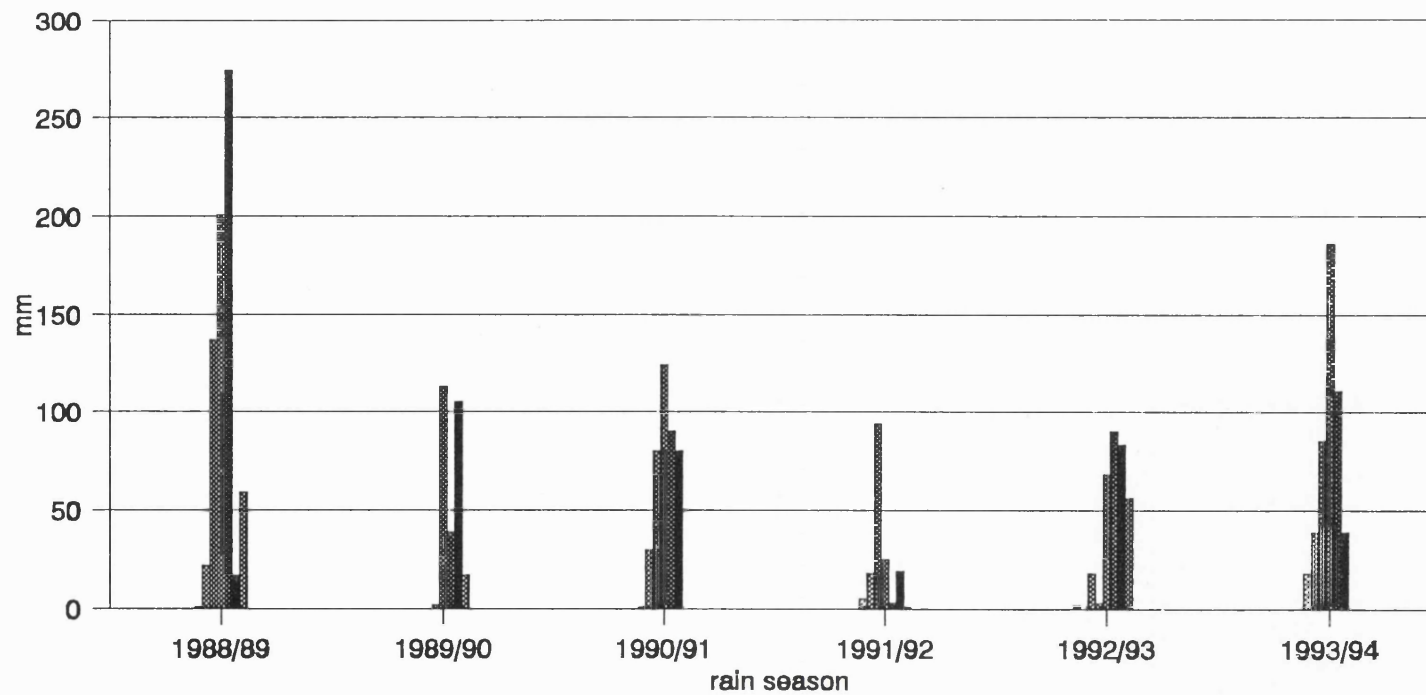
At a place such as |Gomais there is no reason why one cannot both harvest mangetti trees without planting them and harvest products which have been planted in a garden at the same time, especially if it is someone else's garden. Like the !Kung, Hai||om harvest without planting but in contradistinction to them, Hai||om for a number of reasons often also plant without harvesting.

Limiting factors for agriculture are the dry climate, sandy soil and the lack of irrigation means. Figure 2.1 gives the rainfall data for |Gomais (Mangetti-West Farms) over the last six years. The data were gathered by

refer to the Dobe and Nyae Nyae people, while I use "!Xû" for the "northern Bushman"-speaking neighbours of the Hai||om in my field research area. The distinction is relevant because !Xû (northern !Kung) and Ju|'hoan (central !Kung) history and current situation are different in many ways and so are many aspects of their language and social organization.

FNDC/ENOK at 15 (initially 16) cattleposts that are run by this semi-state enterprise in the | Gomais area. Rainfall is very unevenly distributed between cattleposts. Post number 6, where most Hai||om of | Gomais live, gets slightly more rain than the mean for all stations. The whole of southern Africa including Namibia reportedly suffered a severe drought in the early nineties until the 1993/94 season. Thus, the data for these years may not be representative for a longer period although, as Lee (1979:115) has pointed out, there is no such thing as a typical rainfall year in the region at large. If we compare the rainfall data of the years of my field research with that of the Dobe area in the 1960s (Lee 1979:110), rainfall is slightly higher in the Dobe area. If we take into account all six years for which I have data, the mean is about the same. It also differs little from the situation in the Ghanzi area (see Guenther 1986b:107; Silberbauer 1981:84). Considering the drought and the general mapping of climatic zones onto the area, the !Kung and the Hai||om live under similar climatic conditions compared to the quite different habitat of so-called "River Bushmen" (Cashdan 1986, Köhler 1991).

The implication of this is that in both areas (!Kung and Hai||om) agriculture could not provide a reliable form of subsistence on its own - for any population. For subsistence agropastoralists this requires regular moving into other areas or supplementing their income by other means. For Hai||om and !Kung this means that, before the onset of externally funded development projects, agriculture did not recommend itself as an exclusive or predominant preoccupation. A difference, however, remains in that Hai||om have, over the last century at least, been in regular contact with two areas that allow dryland agriculture in most years. These are the Ondonga area to the northwest with its Oshonas (shallow channels of floodwater) and the Otavi-Tsumeb highland to the south with its comparatively high rainfall. The area last mentioned was, and in parts still is, occupied by Hai||om and has been used by white settlers for growing crops for several decades. Furthermore, given the hinterland from which supplies can be obtained in bad years, there has been an increasing influx of Owambo-speaking farmers from the north and Afrikaans- and German-speaking farmers from the south



Year	1988/89	1989/90	1990/91	1991/92	1992/93	1993/94
July						
August						
September					2	
October	1		1	5		18
November	22		30	18	18	30
December	137	2	80	94	3	82
January	201	113	124	25	68	188
February	274	38	60	3	90	111
March	17	105	80	19	85	39
April	59	17		1	56	
May						
June						
Total	711mm	278mm	405mm	275mm	320mm	424mm

Figure 2.1 Rainfall at Mangetti-West (average rainfall at cattleposts)

who cultivate fields in the immediate neighbourhood of the Hai||om. But, although Hai||om seem to have been acquainted with agriculture for quite some time, it has only been a viable option for subsistence for them in combination with hunting and gathering. All farming enterprises in the area rely on external inputs (machinery, drought security, a large labour force). In part this also applies to pastoralism. The pastoralism of well-to-do Owambo, or that of white farmers, is made possible by considerable externally funded investments in terms of boreholes, fences and the like. But small livestock owners, in the past transhumant pastoralists but now mostly permanent settlers, rely either on close kinship ties to a home base near the centre of Ondonga where agropastoralism has a stronger basis, or on financial inputs through labour migration. Realistically, therefore, from Hai||om experience, agriculture and livestock raising can only constitute one facet of a mixed economy. But since the products of agropastoralists are regarded as a welcome dietary complement, it is also desirable from a Hai||om perspective to seek a complementarity of subsistence methods.

Full-time hunting and gathering, by contrast, was, and in some cases still is, a realistic option in terms of climate and natural resources. Figure 2.2 gives an overview of the availability of the main gathered food items over a year based on Hai||om accounts and on recordings of gathering returns over the whole period of my field research.³ The total number of species that are known and gathered is much higher.

Appendix 1 gives a list of all species that were pointed out to me as either being edible or usable as medicine. It is likely that this survey is not exhaustive given that some plants are very localized and seasonal in their occurrence and may therefore not show up in the gathering returns I evaluated. If we bring together the knowledge of Hai||om gatherers in different parts of their country, the number of known edible plants may even

³The figure is a synopsis since it brings together plants that grow in different areas. The names are given with the ending for uncountable (or uncounted) quantities (-e), the form that they most frequently take in discourse.

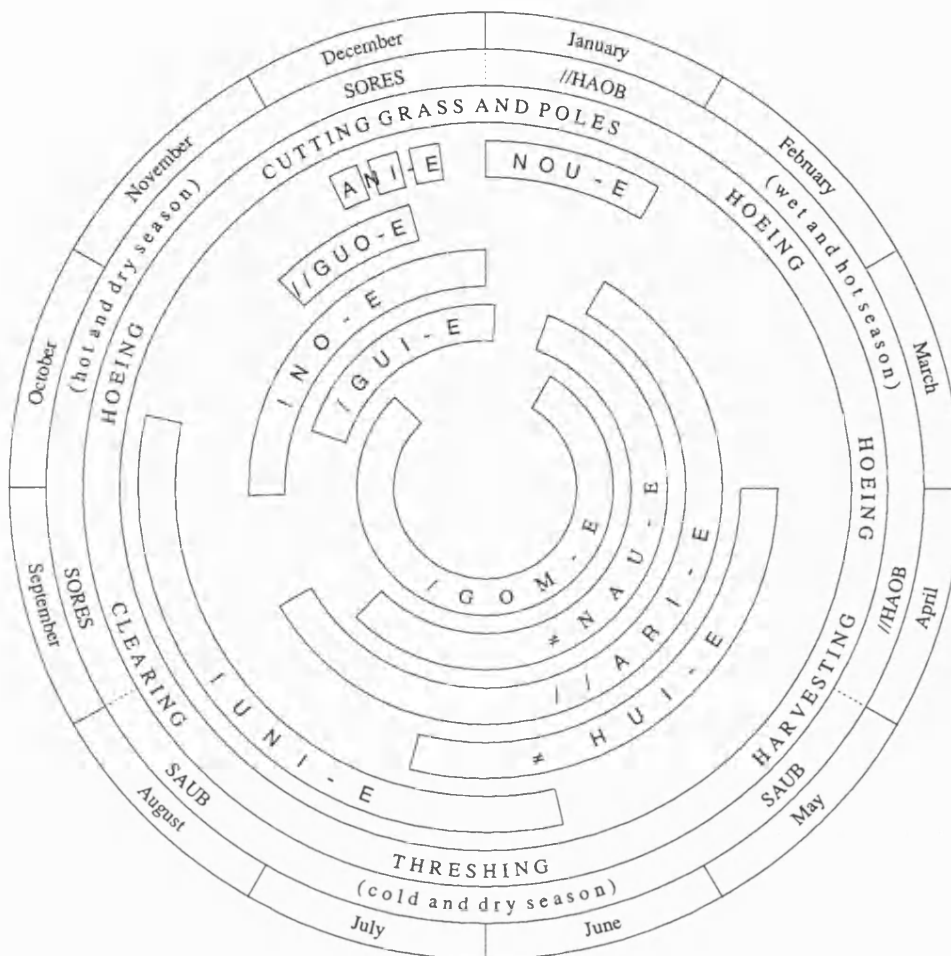


Figure 2.2 Seasonal availability of important gathered food items and of agricultural labour

be as high as in the !Kung case. Lee lists a total of 105 plants (1979:479), Story lists 78 species (1958:114-5) and Marshall lists 65 plant foods but assumes that there are about one hundred known species (1976:107-23, 93). In any case, it appears that in both cases the number of plants that provide the bulk of the gathering returns is fairly low, 14 in the !Kung case (Lee 1979:159) and even less (5-8 depending on locality) for the Hai||om. Hai||om today often maintain that they do not know as much about plants and their usages as their forefathers did.⁴

⁴A similar point was made to me with regard to the consumption of locusts. I was told that these were indeed edible creatures and that some of the children sometimes try a few but that the adults had forgotten from their childhood days how to prepare them properly for consumption.

The question remains as to why this process of "forgetting" has taken place and, more generally, why full time hunting and gathering is no longer practised by any Hai||om (which they generally suggest they did until recently). External coercion may be an adequate explanation for rapid change within a generation for large parts of the more southerly Hai||om area but it is much less convincing for those areas, including most of ≠Akhoe country, where access to wild food resources has not been much restricted by colonization. One striking feature about ≠Akhoe botanical knowledge is that it seems to be fairly evenly distributed among adults of both sexes. This suggests that "gaps" in the body of knowledge are also socially shared. In the following section I will show that the increasing Hai||om concentration on a relatively small number of wild food resources is part of a more systematic pattern that characterizes Hai||om social practice of today and of the past as it is remembered.

It is noteworthy that the knowledge Kwanyama Owambo have about wild plants and their usages seems to be much wider and suggests more intensive usage than that of either !Kung or Hai||om (see Rodin 1985).⁵ Thus, Hai||om and !Kung are not, as hunter-gatherers, more knowledgeable botanists nor more ingenious exploiters of wild resources than their agropastoralist neighbours. Environmental knowledge is not axiomatic but it seems to be part and parcel of more fundamental social patterns of organization. Since Kwanyama and "San" exploit the wild plants side by side as it were, as Rodin's study confirms, with their settlement areas at

⁵This parallels what Lee (1979:180-1) has noted in his comparison between !Kung and the agropastoralist Tonga of Zambia who are more intensive plant users. This effect may in part be produced by the fact that Tonga and Kwanyama are larger in population terms of individuals from whom botanical information can be pooled. The distribution of botanical knowledge that would indicate the knowledge available to an individual in practice is not documented in either case. From what we are told (Marshall 1976:95-6, Rodin 1985:2, Story 1958:7) and from what I have witnessed gathering botanical information with Hai||om and (in 1987) with !Kung, it seems that there is more individual specialist knowledge involved in the case of the agriculturalists than among the hunter-gatherers.

least partly overlapping, one would expect that Hai||om have more opportunities to acquire a wider knowledge and more intensive usage of wild plants than say the !Kung of the Dobe area. In contrast to this assumption, the concentration on a few natural resources seems to be greater in the Hai||om case than it is in the !Kung case. There seem to be cultural, ecological, and social reasons for this. Culturally, some Hai||om, especially of the younger generation, no longer eat some of the wild foods that used to be eaten (see the example of the *!nomeb* root given in chapter four). This is not because these species were directly stigmatized by neighbouring groups but rather because, in terms of internal social classification, the usage of these bush food connotes a way of life restricted to living off nature. From an ecological viewpoint it should be emphasized that not only are some sources limited to certain soils (anthills that provide *nou-e* and *ani-e* are only found on stretches of hard ground) but as figure 2.3 shows, many important fruits are not available at all in large parts of the area occupied by Hai||om. The reason is that present-day Hai||om territory forms a fairly narrow stretch from north to south covering several soil and vegetation zones.⁶

As has been noted in the !Kung ethnography the impressive list of plant foods has to be seen in the context of an uneven regional distribution (Marshall 1976:93). But, although the association of major foods may differ, most major species are at least present at the various waterholes (cf. Lee 1979:178-9). In Hai||om country, by contrast, a large group of plant sources including *!no* (*Strychnos cocculoides*), *|gui* (*Guibourtia coleosperma*), *||go* (*Grewia falcistipula*) and *tsi'xa* (*Cucumis* sp.) which are particularly prized foods, only occur north of *!Gai=nas*, approximately 40km north of *|Gomais*.

⁶It is also conceivable that *=Akhoe* continue this north-south pattern of occupation at least partly as a result of the distribution of a variety of resources. It has to be kept in mind, though, that Hai||om occupied much larger areas, especially to the south and west, before being dispossessed of their land.

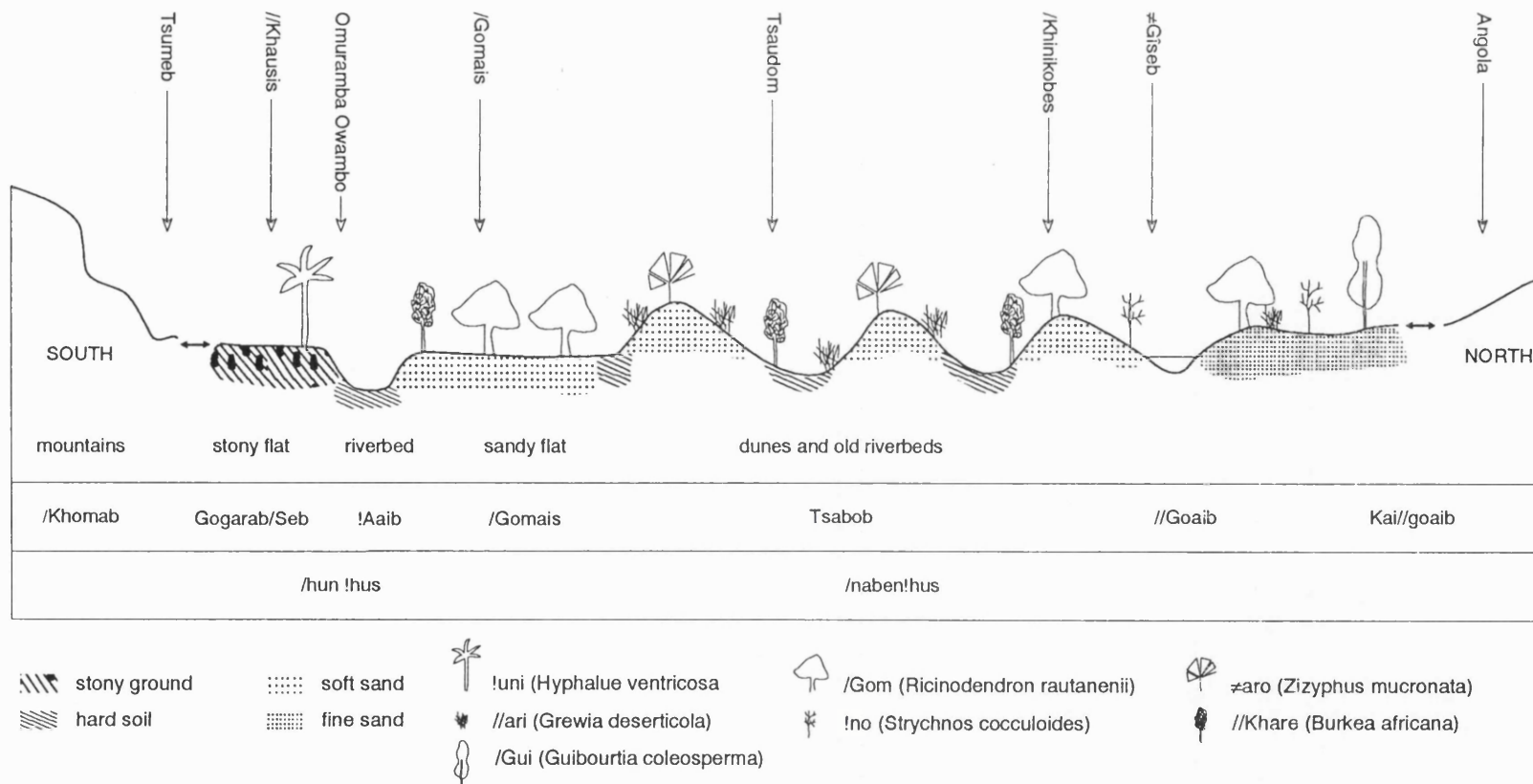


Figure 2.3 Idealized north-south transect through ǀAkhoe country (75 km, vertical interval greatly exaggerated)

Mangetti, in turn, are not found in great numbers south of the Omuramba Owambo nor north of Kobases (near Botos). *!Khores*, the plant that is used for arrow poison, only grows in the Omuramba Owambo, while the *!uni* palm (*Hyphaloe ventricosa*) only grows south of it.

Spatial clustering is not only a feature of plant resources. In early reports from the colonial period Hai||om (Nama-speaking "Bushmen") are said to have participated in the exploitation and trade of large quantities of salt and copper (Hahn 1859:300-1, 1867:286, Hahn in Moritz 1980:30, Rautanen diary 11.7.1886, Galton 1890:136, Schinz 1891:293-4, 351). The availability of both resources is very limited spatially since they are only found in the Etosha region (for salt) and in the Otavi-Tsumeb mountains (for copper). Both are outside the settlement area of ≠Akhoe Hai||om who received these resources either through Hai||om groups of the south or, mentioned more frequently, through Owambo from the east. Even Hai||om I spoke to closer to Tsumeb no longer have knowledge of the Hai||om copper trade which was terminated by the German colonists at the beginning of this century when mining companies received exclusive land rights in the area. The Hai||om copper trade became particularly well-known but early travellers also mentioned other exchange items such as ivory, tobacco and grain (Hahn 1859:300-1), salt and red colouring wood (Hahn 1967:286, 294) that have been important between Owambo and Hai||om and possibly in the relations between Hai||om groups, as well. Estermann (1976[1957]:34) speculates that the Kede (Hai||om) had an important role not only as intermediaries in trading copper but also in bringing the skills of working with iron into southern Angola. It is important to note, however, that the uneven distribution of resources is a general condition of the Hai||om environment and is relevant not only for interethnic trade but also for Hai||om transactions between local groups. This constitutes the social aspect of the Hai||om concentration on a limited number of natural resources.

Oral history has it that mutual visiting between groups took place regularly from the north to |Gomais and beyond into the land of the Omuramba Owambo and conversely from the plains to the mangetti groves

of | Gomais and beyond towards places like ≠Gîseb that provided a number of prized fruits. Hahn observed and described as early as 1857 the use of mangetti by "Bushmen" in the vicinity of the Omuramba Owambo "who had brought them from the sandy flats in the north" (Hahn 1859:300, Hahn in Moritz 1980:26). It is also significant that each stretch of land, the Hai||om inhabiting the area, and the direction leading to it are named according to the characteristics in terms of its soil and/or its vegetation, an issue that will be dealt with in detail in chapter four.

Marriage partners are said to have preferably come from the respective "other" areas in spatial terms thereby strengthening the ties and claims to resources outside one's own country. This pattern continues even today as Hai||om men frequently travel to regions adjoining to the north or south looking for marriage partners. Inter-marriage also occurred, as it still does, with !Xû living to the north and northeast of the Hai||om. !Xû regularly visited the waterholes at ≠Gîseb. In the words of an elderly Hai||om informant:

"The !Xû have their own land [*!hus*] but they came to Otjolo [≠Gîseb] and we stayed together. Their places were small and our place was big, and when the water was finished at their places, at Mondes and at Tsikoxab they came to Otjolo where we stayed together like this, we stayed, stayed, stayed, stayed, stayed, stayed and they drank and ate like that, they ate ≠*khia-e*, they ate *!no-e*, they ate | *gom-e* [mangettis], they ate *sei-e*, they ate | *gui-e*, they ate like this, they ate, ate, ate, ate, ate, ate, [...]. And when the rain came and their waterholes had water, they went back and we just stayed." (Fieldnotes I 83-86)

Another elderly Hai||om told me that they first got to see the Kavango river by accompanying !Xû who had stayed with them as close neighbours. These contacts provided a channel for new things and new ideas. The *kuruais* (bellows) used by many Hai||om blacksmiths today is said to have come from the Kavango. Even today the most able ≠Akhoe woodcarvers who know how to make bellows or wooden drums have spent several years at the Kavango where they learned these skills. But there is more to it than this. Intra-ethnic visiting along the north-south axis and frequent contact with !Xû and their network of relations has a parallel in

more extensive visiting relationships. These relations are also still relevant today, namely contacts with Owambo and Europeans and contacts with fellow Hai||om who are closely associated with these groups (see below).

Hunting

One of the greatest differences between the ≠Akhoe Hai||om country of today and the Dobe or Nyae Nyae areas of the 1960s is the virtual lack of large game in the Hai||om area. The fencing in of the Etosha game reserve prevents any large-scale east-west movements of game. Occasionally a few individual elephants coming from the east give a hint of the former migration patterns of herds. Other animals like giraffe, kudu, and eland which can occasionally be seen in the farm areas between Tsumeb and |Gomais are effectively held back by game-proof fences that surround game farms and that separate the "communal" north from the "commercial" south. Therefore, only small animals are hunted in the |Gomais area such as |*naus* (duiker, *Sylvica grimmia*), !*arib* (steenbok, *Raphicerus campestris*), !*noab* (porcupine, *Hystrix africaeaustralis*), *durub* (aardvark, *Orycteropus afer*), !*naeb* (land tortoise), |*khenis* (guinea fowl), ||*nareb* (lizard), *kairib* (warthog, *Phacochoerus aethiopicus*), |*gaireb* (jackal, *Canis mesomelas*), !*haieb* or !*ôab* (hare, *Lepus* sp.), ≠*gob* (springhare, *Pedetes capensis*), |*heiseb* (tree squirrel, *Paraxerus cepapi*), |*areb* (yellow mongoose, *Cynictis penicillata*).⁷ These smaller animals are not only more abundant but they are safe to kill, whereas Hai||om may be prosecuted when killing larger game. With domesticated animals so numerous, Hai||om seem to resort to slaughtering livestock rather than hunting large game illegally. The crime statistics of the

⁷Animals were identified by ≠Akhoe informants using illustrations from field guidebooks (such as Walker 1988). Only those animals are listed which were hunted and eaten in the period of my field research. I have used the male or female form in accordance with the dominant everyday usage of names.

Oshivelo police station for the years 1990 and 1991 (see appendix 2) show that, considering all cases of stocktheft and poaching in which convictions were obtained in these two years, "Bushmen"⁸ were three times more often involved in stocktheft than in illegal hunting, while Owambo were six times more often involved in poaching than in stocktheft. Note that most (detected) cases of poaching took place along the northern fringe of the Etosha game park and were committed by Owambo with guns. These poaching parties sometimes also involve "Kwankala" who are, however, mostly Owambo-speaking and identify themselves to the police as Owambo. The police statistics can, with some caution, be interpreted as indicating that game is much harder to come by outside the game reserve. Poaching in the reserve requires a gun and selling of skins and meat of wild animals requires transport. Both are available to Owambo but not to Hai||om living on the farms who therefore kill domesticated animals for meat consumption only. The police statistics reflect the two different patterns of exploiting wild game.

On the commercial farms I came across two instances in which larger game animals were killed by Hai||om, namely one kudu (shot with bow and arrow) and one eland (caught with a snare). In both cases animals are killed for their meat. As with smaller animals, the skins or other usable parts such as sinews or the stomach were either left to rot or were given to the dogs. In those instances in which skins were dried, they eventually were spoiled by insects after attempts to sell the skins to local Owambo failed. Hai||om prefer industrially manufactured clothes and goods and it was only at the very end of my field research that I came across a single old Hai||om man who was wearing nothing but a kaross.

North of | Gomais where there is hardly any police control, people

⁸Poaching and stocktheft are mostly carried out by two or more individuals but in the statistics were counted by number of incidents. There are hardly any !Xû-speaking people in the area and all "Bushmen" who appear in the police record are Hai||om as the gender endings ("-b" and "-s") of their names indicate.

do not hesitate to hunt larger animals such as |*amib* (ostrich), |*khob* (gemsbok), and *taub* or *xaib* (kudu) but as table 2.1 indicates returns are low unless the hunter has access to a gun.

Table 2.1 Hai||om hunting returns (May to August) of 1991.

Animal/Hunter	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	j	k	l
Gemsbok (Oryx)	1											
Kudu	1	1										
Ostrich	2											
Springbok											1*	
Duiker	2	10	16	7	5	3	1	2	2	2		1/3*
Springhare		1					1			1		
Porcupine										1		
Aardvark							1					

Bold figures indicate the number of animals shot with a gun (mostly rifles but in some cases also shotguns). An asterisk indicates that these hunters had a gun available only for a short period during that season.

As Osaki (1984) has shown for sedentary Central Kalahari "San" groups involved in agropastoralist duties, hunting returns only increased after introducing changes to hunting methods (adopting hunting on horseback) which also led to a more restricted distribution of game meat. Throughout my field research I never heard of a Hai||om hunter who owned a gun himself. Seven of the men I interviewed (whose responses are incorporated in the table) had a gun lent to them by an Owambo and I was told that this was a common arrangement between Owambo and ≠Akhoe Hai||om. As the table shows, hunting success is with those who have a gun and bullets. Hunters without access to a gun have better returns with regard to catching springhare, porcupine and aardvark (and smaller animals not listed) which are killed either with a club or a probe.

The remaining 13 men I interviewed, who were hunting with bows and arrows, had either markedly lower returns or, in the case of eight men, did not kill any animals at all. This is so despite the fact that no Hai||om man at |Gomais or further north would leave the camp without taking his bow and arrows. Elderly men with bad eyesight carried a club or a \neq gurib (springhare probe) instead.

The figures presented rely on hunters' reports at the end of the sores (dry and hot) season of 1991. Bone and skin remains at the camp site and cross-checking gave some opportunity to test the accuracy of these statements but a degree of uncertainty remains. Since I was only present in a few cases at the time when an animal was brought back from a successful hunt, I do not have any data on the time spent on hunting by men with a gun as opposed to those without. My impression is that the availability of a gun (and the increased return) encouraged men to spend more time on full-time hunting both for internal as well as for external social reasons. At least in one case the Hai||om man returned the gun to its Owambo owner because he had only killed two animals over a period of several months. His bad eyesight and limited hunting ability had prevented him from keeping up with the external obligations. Hunting with bow and arrows gives little opportunity to engage in exchange with Owambo since the meat is locally consumed in accordance with sharing obligations. I know of only two cases where some of the meat hunted with arrows was successfully sold to Owambo. While several Hai||om said that they would like to sell what they had hunted, they concluded that they simply did not hunt enough to do so.

In any case, hunting is an integral part of other immediate-return⁹

⁹Woodburn characterizes an immediate-return system as one in which "people obtain a direct and immediate return from their labour. They go out hunting or gathering and eat the food obtained the same day or casually over the days that follow" (1982a:432). People operating in immediate-return systems avoid long-term commitments and obligations, the accumulation of possessions, and any substantial investment of time in the productive process (Woodburn 1980:98). In immediate-return societies high value is attached to individual autonomy, sharing, free access to resources, orientation towards the present, and egalitarian social relations (Woodburn 1982a:448).

activities since it often takes place when pursuing related activities such as gathering mangetti or visiting another place. At the same time hunting with a gun is usually part of a long-term arrangement with the Owambo owner which can differ depending on how intense the patron-client relationship is that has been built up. In most cases the Owambo requests half of the game because he provided the bullet. Such an arrangement complies with the Hai||om practice of exchanging arrows which gives the owner of the arrow rights to half of the animal (see chapter three). In two cases I observed that the game (ostrich in one case, a steenbok in the other) that was shot with a gun was shared with fellow Hai||om and not with the owner of the gun.

However, reasons for not sharing the food with the Owambo owner, such as the large distance to the Owambo homestead or the smallness of the animal, are easily found and Owambo realize that the hunter may kill something in the bush and eat it on the spot instead of taking it to the owner of the gun. Therefore, in most cases the lending of a gun is part of a larger set of activities of mutual assistance (including work in the field, handicrafts, or herding cattle). The Owambo gun owners lend out their weapons mostly when they work or reside at the urban centres or when they are no longer hunting themselves. It is the increasing presence of the Owambo (and to a lesser degree that of the South African army in the 1970s and 1980s) which Hai||om blame for the decline in game. While this is probably true in overall numbers, current practice as well as written records of hunters-explorers and Hai||om oral accounts suggest that at least in the past Hai||om were actively involved in hunting. European and Owambo hunters in the past employed Hai||om and provided guns for them to hunt in their service.

"In the life we had then the Owambos came from their land to hunt animals, to chase the elands with their horses and carts. |*Nao* [red wood] and meat they would load on the donkey carts and oxen carts with which they came to us. The Owambos also gave us [arrow] poison so that we could shoot animals and then we cut the |*nao* wood for them. We lived well with each other because the rule [≡*hânub*] was good. We stayed well with each other. The Owambo rode on horseback and shot eland and we ate excellently the meat rations they gave us. We ate well and they also gave us millet and they would also give us rations of beans, such a big sack they gave us to eat

[saying] 'Eat our food and stay well like this until we come back again' and went back. This is a long time ago. The Owambo and we stayed like this without quarrelling or swearing at each other." (Fieldnotes I 51-55, 27.3.91)

Note that \neq Noa||khoab gave this very positive account of Owambo-Hai||om relations in a context in which he contrasts his current situation at | Gomais, where the Hai||om are "finished" and are eating "shit food", with that of his youth in \neq Giseb where they were "racing with the animals" and had plenty of meat to eat. He also contrasts the violent conflict between Owambo and Hai||om at | Gomais as a consequence of alcohol consumption with the amicable relations of the past (fieldnotes I 36-42). Even if he may be romanticizing the situation for the rhetorical purposes of dramatizing his current situation, his account shows that present-day arrangements of gun-lending depend on established practice in the sense that the Owambo and Hai||om involved can rely on positive experiences in the past. \neq Noa||khoab's account is supported by that of other elderly Hai||om as well as by senior Ndonga headmen who conveyed the Owambo view to me.

"When the king went to hunt eland and gemsbok, he met up with the Kwankala. The Kwankala would lead the king¹⁰ to the game. After they helped him the king would say: 'Next time you come to my place [...] Then [when they came to visit him] he would slaughter an oxen for them and they would dance all night. They were given presents so that they would come back again. [...] At that time the forest was for the Kwankala. That is why there was no struggle, there was no border.'" (Fieldnotes U18-24, 22.12.92)

Until the beginning of the armed conflict in northern Namibia, the

¹⁰Accounts were not clear with regard to the names of Ndonga kings or chiefs involved, suggesting that the practice was not tied to specific individuals. Missionary Rautanen who was based near Ondangwa at the end of the last century writes in his diaries (11.7.1886) that Ndonga gave munition to "Bushmen" since Shikongo's time, i.e. 1859-74. For details on the succession of Ndonga kings and chiefs see Tuupainen (1970:143) and Williams (1992:189). The term used for "king" is *gaob*, in Khoekhoe languages probably best glossed as "powerful man" (Budack 1972:57) and in Hai||om practice also applied to other "chiefs" including the president of the Republic of Namibia.

Owambo say, it was common for the Ndonga king (or his emissaries) to hand out guns to "Kwankala" in the forest east of the Ndonga settled area so that they would hunt for him and provide him with biltong (dried meat) and skins. Also, the Ndonga king (or emissaries of the king) apparently visited the area up to Otjolo regularly on hunting expeditions.

At the time of my field research the effects of the long military presence in the area were still to be felt as neither party was moving across such wide areas as these accounts suggest. Only the elderly men (in their fifties and sixties) claimed to have undertaken visits to the king or more generally to the Ndonga central settlement area near Ondangwa when they were young. They also remember hunting visits of the king and his envoy which ceased when they were still young. This suggests that visits had become less frequent even before the beginning of the military presence. According to the Ndonga tribal secretary, carrying guns, hunting, and travelling overnight in these areas became dangerous and were not feasible activities during the South African occupation. The practice whereby the king himself would lend guns to the "Kwankala" so that they could hunt for him was stopped for the same reason. It is difficult to date precisely the period during which hunting expeditions and mutual visits took place. It can be assumed that in the whole area in which Owambo settled, "Kwankala" were either already resident or not far away so that interaction of this sort may have gone on for several centuries. By 1857, the only date in this context that is verified by several sources, Otjolo (≠Gîseb), which is today the remotest Hai||om place, was reached by Shikongo, the heir to the Ndonga throne (cf. Williams 1991:142). He had fled with his supporters and property to stay with the Kwankala for protection from his competitors and in preparation for his successful seizure of the throne with the help of Jan Jonker Afrikaner's soldiers (Williams 1991:143). It is even more difficult to quantify the effect of the Owambo - Hai||om interaction on the game population of the area. However, the length and terms of this interaction suggests that the decline in game is not only a cause that may help to account for certain differences between Hai||om and !Kung social

organization today. An increased exploitation of game during this period is also an effect of the Hai||om practice of cooperating with Owambo in hunting expeditions. With regard to the hunting expeditions of Europeans, a very similar pattern emerges from the oral histories. Again ≠Noa||khoab paints a fairly harmonious picture, this time of Hai||om relations with Boers and Germans, omitting incidents of conflict which, as Gordon (1992:109-18) has shown, affected ≠Akhoe Hai||om country though probably only after the period of most intensive hunting was over. Here I want to point out the similarity to the depiction of relations with Owambo hunters.

"[...] We stayed well with the Owambo in the German time. Like children of one woman [*khoes*]. The adult men had German munition and they loaded their guns which they had got from the Owambo and shot animals with it. The white men, the Germans, from the *tsabo!hus* [land of the hard ground], from here, they came with carts to look for elephants and killed them. This is the way the old people lived, this is how they told us. They stayed with the white man who shot, and shot, and shot, and shot, and shot, and shot to fill the carts with elephants and to take them back to their land. They did not do any harm to the Hai||om and they stayed for themselves. Because this was Hai||om land which is now Owambo land. Then it was Hai||om land and the Hai||om stayed for themselves and the Germans only came to shoot elephants." (Fieldnotes I 56-59)

"When we were born the tracks left by the carts that took away the elephants had not yet disappeared. They were big roads on which carts were pulled by ten oxen. They left deep tracks." (Fieldnotes I 61-62)

The account may relate to the early travels of Andersson in 1859, the explorer who came closest to the area in question (cf. Hartmann 1903, Lee and Guenther 1993:196-200, Namibia National Archives n.d.). Alternatively, it may relate to the activities of Green or other European hunters as reported by Hahn (1867:285).¹¹ But it could equally well be based on the more frequent hunting trips of local Boer, German or other hunters in the early years of this century (see Gordon 1992:39). The number of animals shot

¹¹Schinz (1891:339) mentions that his party was not only trading tobacco but also gunpowder and lead bullets to "Bushpeople" who were on a hunting expedition.

seems to have increased considerably as European hunters moved into the area but the underlying pattern remains the same in that Hai||om took part in an enterprise that followed the delayed-return¹² motives of Europeans and Owambo because they wanted to facilitate their own access to old and new resources. There is a further similarity in that these expeditions were followed by visits of ≠Akhoe Hai||om to the settlements of the Europeans after the hunting expeditions had petered out.

"When we stayed at ≠Gîseb with our old people there were relatives of ours who stayed here in the land of the white people. But when we were in need we visited them from ≠Gîseb and they gave our parents maize, blankets and things to wear. We were given trousers, shirts, cups, plates, pots which we took back with us [...]. And, when we were eating food [*khaira-e*] and they were in need, they would move from their land, from the *!aaib* [river country] to come and to eat *!no-e*, ≠*khia-e*, *saubei-e*, |*gui-e*. They would eat, eat, eat, eat what they wanted in peace." (Fieldnotes I 43-46)

"They worked with the Germans and we just walked to each other. Our road was open, if they were coming they were coming if we were coming we were coming in peace. We did not forget each other. [...] We just stayed in peace eating for ourselves and they stayed at the white land like this. When we missed them, we walked to |Gomais and some of them came to the |Gomais. And when weariness was biting us again we walked to the farms where they would fill our pipe, give us salt and tobacco. And then we came back to |Gomais and walked further on to ≠Gîseb." (Fieldnotes I 47-50)

Again the context of this account is one in which ≠Noa||khoab compares the past with the bad behaviour of some white farmers today who do not allow Hai||om to cross their farms. But his statement that the "open

¹²In delayed-return systems, in contrast to immediate-return systems mentioned earlier, individuals hold rights over valued assets such as labour-intensive hunting technology, processed and stored foods, "wild products" improved by human labour, and rights over other people (as in marriage bestowal) (Woodburn 1988:32). For people in a delayed-return system to hold and manage these valued assets, they depend on "a set of ordered, differentiated, jurally-defined relationships" (Woodburn 1982a:432-3). Woodburn classifies almost all societies as delayed-return systems and only a few hunter-gatherer groups like the !Kung as immediate-return systems (1988:32-5).

road" is now blocked may also be read more generally than in the sense of crossing privately owned farmland. At a point in time when the history of interaction has led Hai||om to an increasingly extended use of resources such as wild game, they are now largely cut off from the far-reaching commercial channels. While relying on things and services from outside more than ever, subsistence techniques such as hunting no longer provide an entry to delayed-return enterprises. The large-scale hunting expeditions of the past have ceased and I know of only one instance in which Hai||om participated in two weeks of intensive hunting for an Owambo man who transported and sold the meat near Ondangwa. All other involvements in the commercial exploitation of wild animals are more indirect. Hai||om do not carry out commercial hunting, neither for the sale of trophies nor in the field of nature conservation and tourism. On some privately owned game farms, Hai||om are employed, not as hunters or trackers but as farm-hands. At farm enterprises such as |Gomais, skins of predators are bought by the farm management for money but kills have been few in number over recent years. With few exceptions Hai||om are not engaged in the present-day commercial endeavours of their neighbours to exploit wild animal resources. It is not so much the decrease of animals but the virtual exclusion from delayed-return exploitation of the remaining fauna that accounts for the fact that this process of change has had detrimental effects for the Hai||om hunting economy that was shaped in the encounter between an immediate-return economy and an economy dominated by delayed-return activities. The effects were less severe for the Owambo and European economies which relied only to a small extent on hunting.

Hai||om hunting, at present and as presented in oral history, is an immediate-return activity as defined by Woodburn (see above). This is not altered by the fact that hunts were carried out with guns and in cooperation with commercial hunters tied into the long-distance trade of ivory, ostrich feathers and other such items. A commercial trader and a Hai||om subsistence hunter, shooting elephants side by side, may still be involved in two quite different activities, geared towards different objectives and

embedded in different social arrangements. While it is easy to see that two formally similar activities may functionally be quite different, there can be disagreement on another analytical level. Are we dealing with two distinct systems or with two functionally different groups ("classes") within one socio-economic system? Since every functional analysis relies on the way boundaries of the assumed system are defined, both perspectives are possible. However, the important feature that marks off an immediate-return feature from a delayed-return one is that they have different social implications (Woodburn 1988:32) which can be understood in functional but also in pragmatic terms. In social practice immediate- and delayed-return activities create different starting points for future interactions. Hai||om hunting practised in cooperation with commercial hunters did not require any long-term planning or protection of yields on the Hai||om side since organizing the hunt, providing the hunting technology, and securing the delayed yield that made these hunts possible was left to the outsiders. Changing hunting practices had lasting implications for the Hai||om in terms of depletion of game and increased demand for outside goods. But the social implications of delayed-return activities seem not to have entered Hai||om practice since today Hai||om are nowhere near becoming commercial hunter-entrepreneurs. On the contrary, their way of exploiting wild foods is shaped by immediate-return motives and limits which are transmitted across situations and apparently also across generations. Immediate-return features also shape Hai||om strategies in their encounters with neighbours who engage in delayed-return activities. Thus, it may be more precise to talk about two modes of social practice rather than two seemingly unrelated types of system.



Plate 2.1 *!Khoré*, the plant used for arrow poison, brought to |Gomais from the Omuramba Owambo for exchange with Hai||om further to the north.



Plate 2.2 Mangetti nuts at !Gai-nas, a dry season camp.

Gathering

The first time I saw a mangetti nut, at the very beginning of my field research, it was presented to me by Hai||om man who said to me: "We are people who eat these." This took place in Okongo, the centre of Kwanyama Owambo influx from the north into areas previously exclusively occupied by Hai||om and !Xû. The Hai||om man apparently sought the best distinctive feature that would help me in my proposed plan to work with Hai||om living among Owambo in the area. Gathering wild plant products remains an important feature of the Hai||om economy and of their exchange relations with outsiders, particularly since hunting has declined over the last decades.

In contrast to a decreasing game population, plant and insect food resources seem to have been stable over recent decades. At least there is nothing in the accounts of informants to suggest otherwise. However, the availability of gathered food has decreased in many places like Okongo as influx of Owambo has increased, as domesticated animals affect the environment, and as the terms of exchange between hunter-gatherers and agropastoralists have changed. Okongo was the only place where I saw a (!Xû) man preparing bundles of |nou wood for trade with the Owambo. According to early written sources (Hahn 1867:294) and accounts of elderly Hai||om, this reddish wood was used as a cosmetic and medical substance. Along with meat, hides, ostrich egg shells and feathers, it was one of the main items which Hai||om traded for iron, cannabis, tobacco, salt and millet in their exchange excursions to Owambo settlements. But the importance of plant products in Owambo culture has decreased as more and more industrial products take over ornamental, cosmetic, medical and clothing functions which in the past created a demand which Hai||om were partially able to satisfy. A similar point can be made with regard to the European demand for these products.¹³ In contrast, Hai||om demands for goods provided by

¹³Vahrmeijer (quoted in Arnold, Wells and Wehmeyer 1985) reports that about 2000 tons of mangetti nuts were exported annually to Germany between 1911 and 1914 and in 1916 to England for the production of

Owambo remains high and has even increased. Although gathering continues to be an important Hai||om subsistence activity in settlements where Owambo and Hai||om are co-resident, its role has changed with changes in the terms of interethnic exchange relations more generally.

Mangetti nuts are still central to the life of the ≠Akhoe at |Gomais, the area named after this fruit, and also at other places. As figure 2.2 indicates, mangettis provide food security for most of the year. Although they can become scarce or require long gathering trips from October until March when the new season starts, they are so abundant that they bridge the seasons of other important gathered food. Slightly earlier than Mangetti, the berries of the ||*arib* and of the ≠*nauhaib* (two species of *Grewia*) become ripe and are gathered in large quantities. These are complemented by ≠*hûi-e* and !*hom!hom* which are less abundant but better liked for the fruit is sweeter and has more fruit flesh, more like a date than a berry. When ||*ari-e* and ≠*naun* become dry and scarce at the end of the cold season (*saob*), mangettis are still widely available. The hot dry season (*sores*) is harsh with regard to high temperatures, the drying-up of waterholes, and the hot and loose sand that makes walking exhausting. But this is also the season of several prized fruits such as !*no-e* (wild orange, *Strychnos cocculoides*) and ≠*khia-e* ("Bushman's orange", *Strychnos pungens*) which are valued for their taste and which are transported over wide distances as gifts and exchange items. At the end of the hot dry season before the rains start, the bush and forest become thin and open water is scarce making it easier to hunt wild animals. While plant foods decrease, other faunal resources become available though only for short periods. ||*Guo* and *xandaxane* caterpillars are easily collected from the trees they live on and so are *boron*, black beetles. After the first rains when flying ants (*ani-e*) emerge for a short period, large

margarine. It is not clear whether |Gomais was one of the areas of exploitation. Local farmers told me that a few years back a cosmetics manufacturer showed interest in processing mangetti but the project did not materialize as the price offered for mangetti nuts was too low.

quantities of this fatty and crunchy food can be collected.¹⁴ Later in the rainy season the same anthills provide a tasty mushroom (*nou-e*) which is dug up.

Throughout this annual cycle of seasons mangetti nuts constitute the bulk of the gathered food diet, complemented by the other field fruits mentioned and a number of roots which are available throughout the year, especially |*aru-e* and related species (see appendix 1 for names and descriptions of gathered foods).

The skills involved in locating and collecting different wild fruits have been described in detail by previous authors on southern African hunter-gatherers (Lee 1979, Marshall 1976, Silberbauer 1981, Tanaka 1976) and their descriptions apply to a large extent to the Hai||om as well. In the following paragraphs I therefore want to point out some more complex uses of these gathered foods which are characteristic of, though not necessarily exclusive to, the Hai||om.

Again it is difficult to quantify the effects of commercial ranching on gathering returns. |Gomais is on the whole not overstocked. The livestock kept are largely cattle which unlike goats or sheep seem to prefer grass to mangettis. However, Hai||om blame the presence of goats and cattle for adversely influencing mangetti returns. As for the goat and sheep herds owned by ENOK at |Gomais, Hai||om make use of the fact that these animals, just like wild animals such as antelope (Lee 1979:193) chew mangetti fruits but then regurgitate and spit out the nut. The nut, protected by a shell, is still edible after goats and sheep have eaten the flesh of the fruit. Since the animals are brought back to their enclosure every night, the nuts accumulate there and are easily collected. This allows a regular

¹⁴The method applied which I have observed several times each year is very well described in the Hai||om texts collected by Stopa (1936:5-6) and for the Damara by Vedder (1923:73-4). After dark, torches are lit near an anthill where it has been observed that the winged ants are beginning to fly. Attracted by the light they then start to swarm and can be collected in a hole dug at the foot of the hill where they land after their wings have been burned by the torch.

"harvesting" of mangetti nuts in the enclosure with an astonishingly high return considering the little effort that is required. In one instance (30.10.90) six adult women collected 78.25 kg (i.e. about 13 kg for each collector) in only one hour working their way through an enclosure (15 x 20 metres in size) containing about 150 goats.¹⁵

The goat and sheep posts have the further advantage that large quantities of mangettis can be collected and transported later by one of the ENOK vehicles that regularly go to all posts. Empty animal fodder bags which are also available at the posts are commonly used to collect mangettis and other wild fruits.

To some degree, therefore, cattle posts facilitate the gathering of wild fruits. Hai||om distinguish *xore* that is, foraging fruits and small animals in the course of a day (returning to the settlement the same day), from *!haro* that is, gathering in the bush over several days with only an improvised shelter to return to. These two techniques of wild food exploitation have slightly different implications and are therefore worth distinguishing. Privately owned farms in general do not allow Hai||om to *!haro* on their farms and in some cases make *xore* difficult in that the farmer prohibits anyone from walking through the cattle camps. At |Gomais, *!haro* (expedition gathering) is tolerated and indirectly facilitated by the system of manned and unmanned cattle posts. The pumps at these posts provide a secure source of clean water and, in the case of manned posts, they also provide transport and communication links with the main settlement. Occasionally they are a source for tobacco, milk and other items. Gathering expeditions, consisting of one or two families only, usually camp not far from these water sources from where they not only collect wild fruit for daily consumption but usually collect larger quantities in order to transport

¹⁵In another instance (27.7.91) when only two women collected, the individual amounts were even higher (23 and 32 kg respectively, collected in two hours) despite the fact that there was a Hai||om woman living near the corral who had regularly collected fruits amounting to a total of 8 large bags of 20 kg each which she intended to sell.

them to the main settlement. Since most cattle posts are a considerable distance from the main settlement the resources are less exploited than the places that can be reached on a day-to-day *xore* basis from a major camp except at the peak of the season. Compare the following returns from *xore* as opposed to *!haro* journeys.

Ou!naeb, |Hanagus, |Nagubes, !Ubusun, Hagubes, and ||Goaragub return from one week of *!haro* with the following returns of \neq nau-e (Grewia berries): 33,25 kg, 25 kg, 20 kg, 22 kg, 23 kg, 14 kg. (Fieldnotes H64, 29.4.91)

Adaos, !Hares and !Gamekhas return from a day journey of *xore* with the following returns: 3 kg ||ari-e (berries) plus 12 kg \neq nau-e plus 5 kg |gom-e (mangettis), a handful of \neq huba \neq hune (unidentified plum-like fruit). (Fieldnotes L17, 26.8.91)

Although there is no sharp dividing line between the two techniques, *!haro* supports the collection of large quantities of one type of fruit which in many cases is collected in order to be sold for liquor production or to repay debts with the local Owambo (see below). The place and time of a temporary *!haro* camp are selected with regard to the season and location of an abundant fruit. *Xore*, in contrast, provides more of a mix of fruits that are gathered along the path and many of which are consumed while gathering. *!Haro* camps look more like "traditional" hunter-gatherer camps but they have to be seen as an extension of a permanent dwelling place where most of the belongings are left. Often small children stay behind with their grandparents. Hai||om do not move (*doi*) to *!haro* camps, i.e. they do not move camp, but they visit (*sari*) at these bush camps. Nomadism in terms of moving would be detrimental to the interests of Hai||om who try to get extended access to subsistence other than that derived from hunting and gathering. By contrast, visiting for a week to a month at *!haro* camps in order to return with accumulated fruit which serve as an input to exchange relations is advantageous for extensive access activities. At |Gomais people were keen to go on gathering trips by car not only because this saved them



Plate 2.3 Hai||om men going on a hunting and gathering trip in the dry season (with bows and arrows and with springhare probe).



Plate 2.4 Hai||om women gathering mangettis in the goat corral (| Gomais).

the effort of walking. It also provided a chance for them to collect in a *!haro* fashion without staying away in the bush for too long. Returning with a large quantity of fruit of one sort gives them enough time to exchange or sell some of the fruit before it is consumed.

Despite these resourceful adaptations to a changing situation of co-existence with commercial enterprises, informants often maintained that while in the past there used to still be abundant previous-year mangettis at the time the when new harvest ripened, this is no longer the case. Now, frequently even unripe nuts are brought down from the trees with the help of sticks. They are cracked and eaten while the outer fruit flesh is still green and has to be thrown away. This practice is not criticised, even among the traditionally-minded elderly Hai||om who nevertheless insist on a separation between old fruits and the new fruits that should still be "tasted" by the elders (see chapter three). It is not only domesticated animals which decrease the amount of mangettis that is available for Hai||om consumption but also the increased presence of Owambo in the area. Owambo not only collect mangettis themselves for their own use, but they extract mangetti products such as oil for their home families in the Owambo central settlement area further to the north. The Owambo are also at the centre of liquor production to which much of the trading of mangettis and other wild fruits is geared. As will become clearer below, much of the immediate-return gathering activity is carried out in an extended access fashion designed to link up with delayed-return usages of bush resources. The overall output of mangettis in the |Gomais region may even be larger than that estimated for the Dobe area (see Lee 1973, 1979:202). Covering an area of about 200 square kilometres |Gom-ais (mangetti place) compares favourably with Lee's estimate of the Dobe area with a cluster of 11 groves north of the Dobe waterhole totalling around 50 square kilometres and the total of 35 groves over an area 120 x 70 kilometres in extension with an estimated output of mangettis amounting to 325 million calories (Lee 1979:202-3).

As Lee has pointed out there are many difficulties in estimating the yield of a mangetti grove. But simply by comparing the overall sizes, the

mangetti groves available at | Gomais seem to be similar to the eleven groves north of Dobe in Lee's research area. The | Gomais grove is larger as such but it is further away from the next nearest large grove (approx. 50 km to the north) than the groves in the Dobe area. But again a simple input-output model is misleading in that it privileges ecological conditions rather than social practices in certain ecological conditions as the determining factors. The following description of particular Hai||om cases may serve as an illustration. On 26 and 27 April 1991 !Gamekhas, her children | Abaros (11 years) and || Arirob (8 years), and a granddaughter | Naberos (6 years), gained the following returns from gathering mangettis:

Table 2.2 Returns from gathering mangettis at | Gomais

26.4.91		
morning (3 hours)	!Gamekhas	14 kg
afternoon (2:40 hours)	!Gamekhas	10 kg
	Abaros	9 kg
27.4.91	!Gamekhas	14 kg
morning (1:45 hours)	Abaros	13 kg
	Arirob	4 kg
afternoon (2 hours)	!Gamekhas	14 kg
	Abaros	14 kg
	Arirob	5 kg
	Naberos	5 kg
28.4.92	!Gamekhas	14 kg
morning (2:30 hours)	Abaros	12 kg
	Arirob	3 kg
	Naberos	1 kg

As table 2.2 shows, one woman and three children gathered 132 kg mangettis in three days. In less than 8 hours' work, the average working day in Europe, she gathered 38 kg on her own. Overall, 12 hours of work

provided her with 66 kg of fruit. The time spent on gathering was measured from/to her hut. Since it was the peak of the mangetti season, the walking distance was not great. But consider the following loads that were collected towards the end of the mangetti season (18.11.91) by 7 middle-aged women at a place some 5 kilometres distant where we went by car: 9 kg, 13.5 kg, 12 kg, 15 kg, 13 kg, 14 kg, 17 kg. The time spent gathering in this instance was 3 1/2 hours, so that the return per hour was only a few kilograms less than that achieved by !Gamekhas in the high season. If we accept Lee's calculation, according to which a 12 kg backload of mangettis provides 16,920 calories (Lee 1979:187), then the mangettis collected by !Gamekhas could provide 93,060 calories. In other words, assuming that a working woman of her stature needs 1750 calories per day (Lee 1979:271) she could live on these nuts for about 53 days! The point is that !Gamekhas did not intend to live exclusively on mangetti nuts for almost two months. Instead she made a special effort to collect so many nuts within a short period with the prospect of getting a lift to an Owambo farm to the north where she intended to exchange the nuts for millet, watermelons and other items the Hai||om at that farm had access to. In the following section I will try to show that it is the social parameters of the Hai||om extended access economy that make it unlikely that any Hai||om at |Gomais today would have acted differently to the woman in this particular case. The logic of the system, as I want to demonstrate, lies not so much with the processing and gathering techniques of wild plant products as with the social relations that are involved in distributing them.

The ways in which wild foods are gathered and consumed among the Hai||om correspond closely to those described by Marshall (1976:92-123) and Lee (1979:116-157) for the !Kung. But these fruit also play an important role in interethnic exchange both within and outside the commercial farming setting, with quite different implications than those envisaged by Lee - or Sahlins for that matter.

The usage of gathered food has its parallels to that of hunted animals in the sense that the connected items are not exploited as intensively as they

could be, given the knowledge Hai||om have of ways to process food. Gathered food is still mostly eaten raw and only processed to make it more edible. Berries such as ||*ari* and ≠*nau* are pounded especially once they get dry when a little water is added. Roots such as |*aru* and insects such as the *boron* are mostly cooked in the ashes of the fire and frequently mangetti nuts are also prepared in this way. Caterpillars (such as ||*guo*) and the flesh of the mangettis are cooked in water. These foodstuffs are not mixed with any food bought in the shop nor is the attempt being made to replace items bought in the shop by processing wild foods. Fat and oil are in high demand by Hai||om for cooking fat-cakes, to eat as a sauce together with meat and maize porridge, and also as a body lotion. By crushing and cooking mangetti nuts, it is possible to produce oil. This method is known to Hai||om and was demonstrated for us on request. But the method is used infrequently and only to produce small quantities of oil. In contrast to this, Owambo women at |Gomais produce larger quantities of cooking oil from mangetti nuts, which in many cases were gathered by Hai||om in the first place, and they produce oil more frequently. While Hai||om do not engage in long and complicated processing of food, Owambo spend a lot of their time doing exactly that. The case is even clearer for the ways in which wild fruits are utilized in the production of liquor.

≠*Nau-e* (*Grewia* sp.), ||*ari-e* (*Grewia* sp.), |*gom-e* (mangetti), and ≠*hui-e* (bird plum, *Berchemia discolor*) that is, most of the berry, date or prune fruits mentioned, have already been recorded in Rodin's ethnobotany of the Kwanyama as being used for distilling *olambika* (liquor). Hai||om maintain that they did not distil liquor themselves in the past but it is now an important aspect of Hai||om everyday life not only at |Gomais but also at more remote settlements in the north and even more on the commercial farms to the south. It is the particular composition of |Gomais in terms of ethnicity and the ratio of wage labourers and non-labourers that has fostered a path of commercialization which is particularly destructive for the local Hai||om. However, in principle the same process also applies to other attempts Hai||om make to link up their gathering mode of subsistence with

delayed-return projects. Since the establishment of the commercial farm enterprise in the Mangetti area in 1972 it has been ENOK policy to recruit one third of their local labour force from "Bushman" and two thirds from migrant Owambo labourers. In 1990 this created a ratio of 15 to 28. These were the only jobs available at |Gomais, apart from household hands privately employed by the white farm managers (in 1990 two Hai||om women were employed as kitchen maids and two Hai||om men as gardeners) and two (Owambo) church workers. Some 8 Owambo were more or less permanently accompanied by their wives (or one of their wives) and some of their children. It is some of the Owambo workers, their wives, and some single Owambo women who act as self-employed liquor distillers at |Gomais. As a form of production, liquor production at |Gomais is therefore contingent upon the externally induced commercialization of |Gomais, the import of migrant labour, the establishment of facilities for a large permanent settlement including a shop, and, above all, the wages paid to ENOK workers. The profits of the liquor business, however, are to a very large extent fed back into the "communal" areas where they help to support and expand the principal homestead of each of the Owambo involved.

Mangettis provide the main raw material for liquor production and as with *≡nau-e*, *||ari-e*, *!uni-e* and the other fruits used, it is the local Hai||om who provide them. However, it is not always the case that Hai||om set out to collect, sometimes even on special request by an individual Owambo, and then sell the fruits for cash. At other times the collected fruit is directly exchanged for a bottle of liquor or is presented in order to satisfy old drinking debts. In some cases the commercial exchange is embedded in a long-term dependency relation with the characteristic signs of a patron-client relationship.

The collection of mangettis and other suitable fruits then becomes an integral part of a set of other services rendered to the Owambo including the actual distilling itself, household activities such as washing clothes, house construction or gardening work. From the Hai||om point of view, this allows them to take advantage of Owambo delayed-return operations such as

investing in the distilling facilities, in sufficient fruits and the sugar needed, and in a "cuca shop" (liquor bar) with some secure storage. Above all Hai||om rely on the fact that the Owambo migrant labourers are in the social position needed to run a liquor business continuously and successfully. Unlike Hai||om who are under continual pressure to share with their kin, migrant Owambo workers are largely independent of obligations to local people. In 1990/91 there were 40 Owambo men, women and children at |Gomais. Of those adults who were involved in liquor production, two were originally from Angola while the others came from the various Owambo areas as follows: Kwanyama (14), Ndonga (6), Kwambi (3), Ngandjera (2). This already indicates the fact that there were very few close kinship links between them. Since liquor entrepreneurs have few relatives (even children) at |Gomais, there is no immediate pressure on the profit being made. Furthermore, it is socially quite acceptable for an Owambo to protect his economic input in the interest of a delayed-return ideology which they all accept.

The liquor entrepreneurs need to bridge two periods of delay in economic activities. One is the availability of raw products in relation to demand. In the liquor shops of |Gomais large quantities of raw fruit are being stored for future processing. In a time-consuming process the fruit is distilled into *olambika* (Hai||om: *lameka*) which is consumed throughout the year but particularly after payday at the end of each month. The second period is that between consumption and receiving the money for it. Most regular Hai||om drinkers are in continual debt which is only paid off when cash comes in either from a state pension (in 1991 raised to 90 Rand per month paid to all who have an ID proving that they are older than 65), wages or gifts from relatives working on the farms. If this cash does not come in, the Hai||om are forced to gather more raw products or to help in the distilling process in order to cover their debts. The social constellation allows the Owambo to operate in such a delayed-return fashion. Given that the Hai||om as their counterparts are not in a position to do the same, they can make considerable gains. The following calculation gives an indication

of the profit that Owambo liquor distillers make.

In 1991 the prices for *lambika* were R 2.50 (200ml bottle), R 10 (750ml bottle) and R 12.50 (litre bottle) although the market was not as transparent as these figures suggest. Much quarrelling arose from disagreements about exact change, and the calculation of debts. Furthermore, since the second bottle from a distilling process is weaker than the first, prices are sometimes adjusted accordingly.

In order to distil 2 litres of *lambika* from *†nau-e*, it takes about 25 cups (each about 250 g) of berries, which are bought from Hai||om collectors for about 20c per cup, and about 2 bags of brown sugar (R 1.90 each). That leaves a profit of R 8 for each litre bottle sold. In 1991 8 Rand could buy for instance 1 kg of maize meal, 1 kg of sugar and a handful of sweets in the farm shop. If mangettis are used, the profit for the liquor producer is even higher. An amount of 11 kg, usually gathered within one morning or afternoon, can give a return of R 1 (in April) or R 4 (in October) when sold. When processed the same quantity of fruit can produce 2-3 bottles of liquor and (adding sugar) a net profit of about R 25. Assuming that a Hai||om could sell the fruits they collected in the form of liquor rather than selling the raw product s/he would in such a case ^{yield} several times the amount. But even when the liquor is produced for own consumption rather than retail, it yields more than selling the raw material and then buying the processed liquor.

In one case I recorded the activities of a Hai||om couple who spent two hours gathering mangettis in order to produce liquor themselves. Returning to the camp Xareb and his wife had gathered 7 kg mangettis (some 880 nuts with fruit flesh). A pot was filled with water in which the whole mangettis were first cooked for one hour. Then the fruit flesh was separated from the nuts. The nuts were cleaned in about 15 litres of water in order to get off as much fruit flesh as possible and were then discarded. The cooking water was added and everything was left in the sun for more than half a day to ferment. In the evening the "ripeness" of the brew was tested. When enough bubbles came up, the actual distilling began in which the fruit was cooked in a firmly closed pot (clay is used to close the lid) which is connected to an iron pipe that needs to be constantly cooled with water so that the steam condenses and enters - in a thin trickle - the bottle placed under the other end of the pipe. In this instance the couple got 3 bottles of 750 ml, i.e. 2.25 litres. (Fieldnotes H43, N80-81, 24.4.92)

The profit is further increased because the money gained from *lambika* production is used for buying malt and sugar at the local shop, the raw products for brewing beer (*!khari*) for which there is an even bigger

market (sold at 50c per mug). Less intoxicating but more filling *!khari* is also consumed by those Hai||om (including children) who do not drink the stronger *!ambika*. Lack of cash prevents the Hai||om from preparing *!khari* themselves as often as they would like.

The Hai||om are well aware of the bad bargain they get in comparison with the liquor distillers and repeatedly try to break out of this disadvantageous situation. The problem for them is that exactly those bridging devices between input and delayed return already mentioned are not available for individual Hai||om. They lack the material resources to endure long periods without income. They also lack the social resources that would allow them to fend off interference by others in the period between collection and sale and that would allow them to enforce the payment of debts. Positively speaking Hai||om possess a range of social resources that allow them to tap into the resources of fellow Hai||om, to get immediate access to resources accumulated by other Hai||om, and to withstand any attempt to force them into balancing up an uneven exchange balance. This also happened in the case discussed above:

About 750 ml of the liquor were consumed by the couple and people passing by so that in the end two bottles were filled. The first bottle was carefully stored away out of sight in the couple's hut. By the time the last bottle was filled a number of people had gathered. The contents of the bottle were distributed into smaller bottles which were given to individuals in the same camp. The remainder was shared by everybody else present. During the night Xareb managed to sell two small bottles to Hai||om workers of the neighbouring camp (*||gâus*). But only one man paid with cash. The profit the couple had at the end of the day was no more than what they would have got selling the raw product. They did, however, consume a good quantity of liquor themselves, but they had also had a whole day of work.

This case illustrates the social dynamics at work. For Hai||om distilling on one's own account only pays in a situation in which a surplus they have collected with the intention of converting it into cash either cannot be sold or cannot be used as a transaction in a long-standing patron-client relationship. It is when faced with this kind of situation that an individual

Hai||om may attempt to distill liquor himself or herself under his or her own control in his or her own domestic environment. The distillation pipe, the bucket and other things needed are borrowed from fellow Hai||om and money gifts from an employed Hai||om, a pension-receiving elder or a son-in-law committed to brideservice make it possible to purchase sugar (when made without sugar, the liquor is less valued and more difficult to sell). The aspiration is to brew not just for personal consumption but also to sell the surplus in order to get the money which one was originally aiming at when collecting mangettis for liquor production. In most cases this ambition fails because the distillation is not placed in the commercial framework. This is quite literally the case in that the distillation takes place under the keen observation of all neighbours, a lot of whom very soon gather and have to be given a share. It is only the more distantly related fellow Hai||om, those of another camp, who are potential customers. But since they are usually short of cash, promises to pay are made which are then later not kept. If there are Hai||om who have provided materials or sugar, they too will be given a share. And, given that the desired money for the purchase of shop food has not come in, the distillers themselves (usually a couple) consume a large quantity of the distilled liquor.

The fact that liquor distillation in an immediate-return context does not pay is not the worst of the consequences. Liquor production directly affects many parts of social life in a destructive way which is lamented by the Hai||om themselves. Intoxication regularly leads to fighting and bodily assaults even between close relatives. It leads to deteriorating health especially for children whose parents drink regularly. It frustrates economic activities in other fields. Drinking is the most frequent cause for Hai||om to be dismissed from their jobs and it undermines the already weak position of Hai||om towards outsiders. This is particularly true for relations with white farm owners who are often very strict with workers who stay away from work because of drunkenness or, even worse, come to work when drunk.

But only some Hai||om maintain that drinking in itself is a bad thing. When discussing problems arising from drinking, it is often claimed that "in

the old days" (before they came to stay with the Owambo at places like | Gomais) they simply distilled liquor from wild fruit, drank it together and went to sleep. This is often contrasted with the behaviour of drunkards (*a-aon*) today who look for trouble when drunk. Why do Hai||om engage in transactions with their neighbours, for instance with regard to distilling liquor, which leaves the profit to these neighbours and which on the whole involves rather unfavourable terms? An important part of the answer is that such costly transactions comply with the overall logic of an immediate-return system that extends into a highly commercialized context. In this context Hai||om subsistence activities are geared towards the procurement of cash in order to have flexible, prolonged and individual access not only to alcohol but also to other goods. Mangetti liquor distillation exhibits a general feature of Hai||om relationships with their neighbours that needs to be investigated further.

The mode of exploitation of mangetti nuts and other wild fruits at | Gomais by the local Hai||om supports the view that we are dealing with an immediate-return activity. Mangettis are collected when available and are consumed or exchanged immediately without storage. The investment of time and energy in the process of gathering is returned immediately so that it is more appropriate to talk about spending time and energy rather than investing it. This pattern persists in Hai||om interaction with other groups. Attempts to accumulate mangettis or to invest mangettis in a form of delayed-return processing are regularly frustrated by sharing demands. One strategy to evade these demands is to collect mangettis for the Owambo who provide the means of storing, and the means to process mangettis, and who have the independence to sell the products with some profit. Many of the manual tasks involved in this process are provided by Hai||om who, however, make no long-term gain. At best they can improve their immediate-return output by participating in the delayed-return operations of the Owambo. At worst they increase their dependency by granting the

Owambo control over the allocation of returns.¹⁶

The return gained from providing raw material for commercial processing is not re-invested in future production. On the contrary, in many cases the return gained is directed backward in time to cover past debts. That is to say, the return for time and energy spent has already been received and consumed even before the economic activity started. Similarly, the collection of mangettis from a goat enclosure brings a restricted short-term advantage while on a larger scale the presence of commercial ranching cuts gathering returns. The delayed return goes to the white ranching company that feeds animals on mangettis (among other things) and sells these animals at a profit. The commercial farmers can also be said to "feed" their surplus workers and their dependents on mangettis thereby maintaining a long-term labour pool since the Hai||om collect mangettis to bridge the immediate hardships in periods of unemployment.

Blacksmithing, Handicrafts and Wage Labour

As has been demonstrated above, Hai||om hunting and gathering are in many ways incorporated into the cash economy. It is therefore inappropriate to take the usage of natural resources as the main criterion for defining Hai||om economy and culture because it overstates the difference between hunting and gathering and other forms of foraging. In popular descriptions of "Bushmen" in Namibia and abroad, wage labour is considered the exact opposite of living off nature. This, however, obscures

¹⁶A long term possibility for fusing with an Owambo household is intermarriage where the gathering returns of the Hai||om woman feed into the delayed-return economizing of the Owambo man. But dependency is even more marked in these cases since many Owambo men have an Owambo wife elsewhere and this is where the majority of returns are directed. The Hai||om women and their Hai||om kin remain dependent under these conditions and their gains are irregular and immediate in the sense of depending on the Owambo's current liquidity (see chapter three).

the continuities between the two.

Handicrafts such as blacksmith work and woodcarving which Hai||om carry out for cash have developed out of the skills and knowledge which are needed in order to produce the necessary tools for hunting and gathering. The sources documenting Hai||om copper exploitation in the Otavi-Tsumeb mountains are equivocal in their assessment of the role played by "Bushmen". Schinz' description (1891:293) suggests that the "Bushmen" were doing the mining in the mountains and left anything else to the Owambo, including the right to receive tribute. Hahn emphasizes that the "Bushmen are so jealous about this trade that they do not allow any stranger, including the Ndonga people, to see the place where they mine" (1867:286). At the same time he states in his diary that "some of the copper which is mined ("graben", lit. "dug") by the Owambo is given to the king as tribute ("Abgabe")" (Hahn in Moritz 1980:30). He also states that "Bushmen" received iron products such as knives and axes as a return (Hahn 1967:286).¹⁷ This rather incoherent picture may result from real differences between the position of "Bushmen" who lived very close to the copper mountains and others who lived closer to the Ndonga centre. ≠Akhoe accounts claim that blacksmithing, that is, iron forging not smelting, was brought to them from the Kavango and has only been practised fairly recently. But ≠Akhoe country is situated some distance from the two major trade routes in the area (today tarred roads, see map 1.2). While these routes were probably accessible for ≠Akhoe, the traders, following the advice of their "Bushman" guides, were kept from taking a straight northerly route into ≠Akhoe country because of the "waterless sandy flat" north of the

¹⁷Loeb, writing about Angolan mines in the north of the Kwanayama area, reports that in the past Owambo visits to the mines were organized as military expeditions and that the consent of "Bushmen" was sought beforehand. He quotes an unpublished manuscript by Schär according to which "the [Bushmen] owners of the bellows receive a share of the iron in payment for the use of their equipment" (Schär in Loeb 1962:191). The word "Bushmen" was inserted by Loeb. For the Tsumeb area the sources do not mention any "Bushman" ownership of bellows.

Omuramba Owambo (Hahn 1959:299). On the whole, the copper trade does not seem to have had a lasting impact on the Hai||om economy. Today Hai||om find the raw material for their blacksmith work in scrap metal of all kinds (especially in abandoned army gear) from which they produce axes, knives and arrowheads.¹⁸

In doing blacksmith work for neighbouring agropastoralists, Hai||om have not necessarily increased the delayed-return component of their economy. In many instances Owambo pay in advance for work they want to have done, usually by exchanging other items such as a piece of clothing or more iron that can be used, or they pay as soon as the knife or arrowhead is completed. Thus, in some cases this is an "advance-return activity" or at least one that requires less delayed-return organization than say agriculture or livestock breeding. Rather, processing iron supplements the range of natural products that Hai||om use to engage in their exchange relations that are aimed at obtaining access to a large variety of outputs of the delayed-return activities of outsiders. We should also note that blacksmith work is valued for its output as such rather than for its input-output ratio as the following statement of a Hai||om *kurukhoe* (blacksmith) indicates: "The Owambo are rich and can buy the iron things in the shop. We are poor, that is why we do it ourselves".

Although most men learned how to make and use the bellows by staying for some time with Owambo or Kavango, blacksmith work has been effectively Hai||omized both ideologically and in effect. Stories are told about how the culture hero Haiseb used bellows for the first time (to make an iron with which he made an anus for the Lion). Today ironwork is part of the ethnic and social identity that distinguishes Hai||om from Owambo who often maintain a distance from this kind of work. Young Owambo men produce very skilled wooden arrowheads but in all instances I observed they

¹⁸Unlike the bows and arrows sometimes sold to tourists by "Bushmen" along the main roads to Ondangwa and Rundu, the production of hunting bows and arrows takes up days of concentrated precision work. However, the form is functional and without any decoration.

went to "Kwankala" for their ironwork especially for arrowheads and ornamented knives or for services like the sharpening of an axe. However, even the most skilled Hai||om artisans I came across were not practising blacksmith work or woodcarving for their Owambo neighbours in a way that would allow them to make a living out of it. The only case where such work provided a living was in the protected environment of a development project south of |Gomais where handicrafts were supported by subsidized prices, externally maintained links to markets, and a lack of any other mode of income.

Although the ≠Akhoe own the means of production (bellows, files and hammers often constitute the largest, certainly the heaviest things individual Hai||om own), they often depend on the Owambo for the raw product, iron. Also, ≠Akhoe are often compelled to accept the Owambo terms of exchange because they tend to treat blacksmith work, and handicrafts more generally, as immediate-return activities. Usually no large stocks of iron products are kept and individual production and exchange transactions prevail. Blacksmith work provided an additional income in which Hai||om have a vested interest because they need arrowheads, knives and axes themselves for a variety of subsistence activities. While blacksmith work and woodworking (carving cups, mortars, and spoons) is an exclusively male occupation, Hai||om women are involved in other handicrafts such as beadwork, basket weaving (also common among Owambo) under terms very similar to those outlined for blacksmith work.

On the commercial cattle farms Hai||om have, in contradistinction to workers from Owambo and Kavango, a reputation for being good at handicrafts and other technical jobs required on a farm. They share this reputation with Damara but, in contrast to Damara, Hai||om almost exclusively find work in the rural areas whereas many Damara work as shopkeepers, clerks, technicians, nurses or teachers in towns like Tsumeb.



Plate 2.5 Hai||om men sitting in the shade at | Gomais making bows and arrows (bellows at the left).



Plate 2.6 Owambo equipment for distilling liquor.

The manual work Hai||om do for a wage at, say, | Gomais, is work "in the bush" such as driving cattle into enclosures, tracing missing cattle, clearing ground and constructing enclosures. On many of the privately owned farms payment is still in kind rather than in money. If the wage is paid in money, most of it is spent on products which the farmer brings in from town. Payday is usually once a week or, as in the case of | Gomais, once a month with a "buying-on-the-book" credit system. In either case workers do not have to save or manage larger sums of money. On the farms workers receive more expensive items such as a bicycle, a pair of shoes or a radio from the farmer who holds back a certain amount of money each week until the purchase price has accumulated. Alternatively, these things are bought when extra payment is due, for example for Christmas or when the worker takes his annual leave. Thus, workers rarely accumulate money or actively save for something.

"Buying on the book" (spending the wage on paper before receiving it) effectively replaces delayed return with advance return so that in most cases very little cash is paid out at payday. Since many Hai||om workers at | Gomais tend to finish their money long before payday, the employer often takes over the choice of goods. Either more expensive goods such as cooking oil or large quantities of coldrink or tobacco are refused or an amount is allocated for every two days which then is the limit for shopping. If some money is handed out at the end of the month, shopping behaviour shows how unfamiliar wage earners are with housekeeping. The usual way of shopping at the farm shop at | Gomais is that a few things are bought, the change is received and taken outside where a decision is made, often after consulting wives or other relatives, about what to buy with the remaining money. This way a worker may re-enter the shop three or four times until the shopping is complete. Figure 2.4 compares expenditures of a Hai||om worker and an Owambo worker over the period of a year. Both men were "buying on the book" at the | Gomais shop and the data is taken from these books. For comparative purposes goods were divided into five groups: 1. fleeting non-foods (matches, candles, batteries, soap, vaseline), 2. lasting

non-foods (pillows, pots, clothes, knives, torches, blankets), 3. processable food (maize flour, tea, malt, oil, fat), 4. processed food (biscuits, crisps, cooldrinks, bread, jam, tinned meat), and 5. sugar (singled out because of its amount and importance in liquor production).

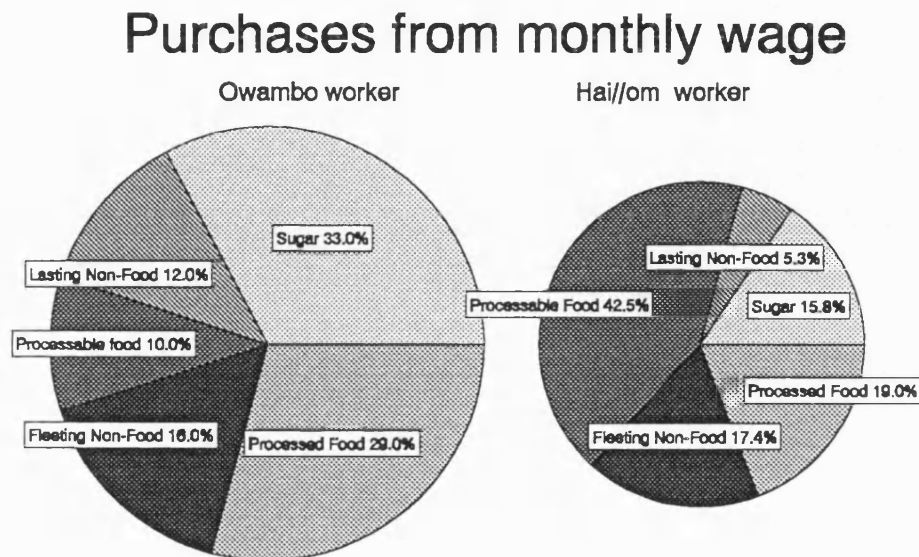


Figure 2.4 Expenditure of wages during one year period

The figures show that the Owambo worker has spent much more on sugar, processed food and lasting non-food items than the Hai||om worker but considerably less on processable food. The high amount of sugar is explained by the fact that it serves as an input for the liquor business of the Owambo. But the larger quantity of lasting things also suggests some investment in the sense that these are items which are often used as gifts and exchange items when travelling to "Owamboland". By contrast, the high quantity of processable goods bought by the Hai||om man suggests his involvement in sharing obligations which, in this case, includes brideservice as this man stays with his in-laws. He spends 18% of the total on maize meal alone (359.5 kg) indicating the large number of persons who live from his wage.

With regard to the other Hai||om workers a similar pattern emerges. Other Owambo workers do not buy regularly "on the book" so that no detailed data is available. However, participant observation in the shop

suggests that the example is not untypical. It should be noted that the situation of Hai||om workers is different in the case of some long-term farm employees who do more planning and householding on their own. For most ≠Akhoe Hai||om wage labour is only a more regular and secure version of living off the commercialized land, or, to put it differently, foraging on a delayed-return system. In many ways it is no different from day labouring which is readily available to many Hai||om when offered in the farming area or beyond. Except for the cutting of fence poles (droppers) which are usually paid by piece, the wage that one may receive is not known before the end of the working day(s). Whether it will be paid in cash or kind or a combination of both depends on the employer.

At farms north of the "red line", day labour is more frequent but less often paid in cash. Hut construction or agricultural work is usually paid with locally brewed beer or with millet. Grass collected for the construction of roofs is usually paid by the bundle. Each bundle (between 8 and 12 kg) would yield 2-3 Rand. Individuals will rarely collect more than two bundles a day depending on how long a walk is involved. A regular demand for grass can only be expected at the end of the dry season when there is not much work in the fields. Moreover, grass is only in demand near larger Owambo settlements. In these settings the grass collectors often live on millet as their staple food and that is what they purchase from the money they receive. The money value of a 20 litres bucket of millet was about 12 Rand (in Ekoka 1991) which allows a family of six to eat for about two weeks depending on what else there is to supplement the millet. But if the number of dependents and visitors is large, it may be finished in two days. In sum, there are many unpredictable factors in collecting grass for money, not so much in terms of where to find it but in terms of the conditions under which the collecting effort can be transformed into a consumable return. In some cases, when gathering on direct demand, the return is close to immediate, in other cases delayed. What distinguishes collecting grass (and handicrafts or day labour) from subsistence hunting and gathering (or subsistence agriculture) is that the former relies on a remote return which

does not primarily depend on performance and knowledge of the environment but on the intermediary activities of other economically active groups, that is, those who can afford to buy the grass and handicraft products.

In a commercialized setting there are also forms of "direct-return activities" that are more akin to subsistence foraging than the "remote-return activities" of wage labour, handicrafts and commercial collecting. Access to the meat of unsaleable livestock should be mentioned in this context. At large cattle enterprises such as | Gomais there is a regular loss of livestock due to disease and to predators. In the course of 1991 some 4 to 16 head of cattle were lost every month (an annual total of 129). In about two thirds of these cases (estimated by the farm manager) the animals are slaughtered and the meat distributed free amongst workers and their families. This means that on average 7 head of cattle per month are available, although in many cases the meat is of low quality because the animal is only found a day or two after its death. Living on a commercial farm involves access without payment to a host of other things many of which are not specific to the Hai||om but are found among all local people who lack the money to profit more intensively from the cash economy. However, in many of the commercial areas non-workers are often excluded from these strategies because they are not allowed to stay on the farms. At places like | Gomais, many Hai||om, whether workers, unemployed, women or children have access to the rubbish and side products of the commercial farming system of which I only list some. Engine oil for use in waterpumps is put into small bottles which serve as lamps with pieces of cloth as wicks. Old car tyres are used for shoes, while the rubber of tubes is popular for catapults and old air filters are used as stools. Plastic pipes are used to make quivers and bracelets. Wire is used in hundreds of ways ranging from making earrings to making household tools (whisk, tripod) and mousetraps and snares. Cattle lick serves as "table" salt (*tabe-e*, *†o-e*) and sacks from animal fodder as building material. Bottle tops are used to replace cocoons in dance rattles and plastic straps from boxes prove a much more durable string for the

xaraxaras (a musical instrument) than the palm leaves that were used in the past. Any piece of iron can be used in blacksmith work and ingenuity also prevails with regard to leftover military equipment, with empty grenade shells used as mortars, large bullet cases as pipes, munition containers as soundboxes of guitars and trip-wire as guitar strings.

These forms of foraging that accompany many forms of rural wage labour may at least partly explain why many Hai||om congregate and stay at centralized settlements despite the conflict and social disruption that frequently occur at these places. Hai||om and many !Xû-speaking people in this area have a history of staying at places which may be called service centres from a forager perspective. In the early 1960s Finnish missionaries established mission centres at Okongo, Ekoka and Mpungu where the formerly dispersed "Bushman" population became concentrated in central places and was provided with facilities such as a school, a clinic, stores, machinery, water pumps, etc. (see Hynönen 1963, 1964, 1981, Heikkinen 1984).¹⁹

At the end of the 1970s the violent conflict in the north of Namibia made operations difficult for the Finnish missionaries. Army camps, established all over the Hai||om area, took over some of the functions mentioned in an attempt to attract a large number of Hai||om and !Xû. Unlike in "Bushmanland" and the Caprivi (Marshall and Ritchie 1984, Lee

¹⁹The Finnish mission centres had less of a protective function than mission stations elsewhere as for instance in the Cape province during the 18th century (Szalay 1983:143-88). In Namibia the best known "Bushman" mission of this kind was run by German missionaries at Gaub (||Gaub) between Tsumeb and Grootfontein. Founded in 1893 Vedder and other missionaries attempted to settle the remaining nomadic "Bushmen". At the same time they tried protect the "Bushmen" from the settlers but apparently also tried to protect the settlers from the "Bushmen" (see Köhler 1957:59-60, Gordon 1992:65). Unterkötter reports that in World War I the "Bushmen" of Gaub dispersed and the settlement failed (Unterkötter 1937:86, 1942:309). Today Gaub is still a church-owned farm but has no "San" residents. A similar centre planned by the Dutch Reformed Church and the Tsumeb farmers association (Swanepoel n.d.) was never realized. In terms of both temporal and spatial distance it is very unlikely that any of the Hai||om and !Xû at the Finnish mission centres had any knowledge of Gaub.

and Hurlich 1982), most Hai||om in this area seem to have been only loosely affiliated to permanent and temporary army camps. At |Gomais sources of income were limited to occasional labour, handouts, and prostitution (cf. Edwards et al. 1985:17-19). With the retreat of the South African army all these camps were abandoned. Today there are, in addition to |Gomais, two large service centres that are a result of this change. Fisa (or |Ao|aib), run by the private "Ombili Foundation" was established by local farmers and ex-army staff as a response to the army retreat. The other centre run by the Ministry of Lands, Resettlement and Rehabilitation is located at Tsintsabis, the site of a former police and army camp.

At these three centres there are limited opportunities for wage labour but the number of Hai||om residing at these places is much higher than could be sustained directly by the jobs available. At |Gomais, and at both of the other centres mentioned, free food distribution has been a magnet attracting residents and visitors and discouraging people from leaving. |Gomais was the least reliable centre for free food distribution and the quality and quantity of the food was much lower than at the government and private "development" schemes. Part of the reason why such a large ≠Akhoe population would settle at |Gomais may be that unlike Fisa and Tsintsabis, |Gomais had, even before the war and the establishment of ENOK, been a place frequented by ≠Akhoe from the north. More fundamentally, it provided opportunities for hunting and gathering, as well as access to the Owambo economy and to wage labour and all the commercial extension services that go with them (a store, transport, water pumps).

At |Gomais, the presence of "Bushmen" was not liked by the managers in charge during the last decade. However, Hai||om presence, while far from being undisturbed, has so far not been endangered, unlike on the commercial farms of the south. The white farm managers, much as they would like to, cannot expel them from the land (as happens to non-workers on farms in the "commercial" areas). At |Gomais no Owambo landlord can force them to work, nor does any seasonal lack of water make movement necessary. Unlike at the "development" schemes, nobody at |Gomais is

forced to take up wage labour or other prescribed tasks.

In short, service centres, especially | Gomais, are attractive to the Hai||om in that they allow a mixed economy and the perpetuation of an extended access economy. Although livestock herding and agriculture are the core preoccupations from the perspective of the outsiders running the centres, in none of these cases has there been a long-term tendency for Hai||om to adopt the delayed-return principles that underlie these modes of subsistence. In all cases mentioned the organization of delayed-return activities remains with non-Hai||om, namely white bosses and Owambo or Damara foremen.

Gardening and Agriculture

After being questioned for some time on gathered plants, Khau | nais asked me: "Toma, now you have asked us all about the food of the bush, when are we finally going to talk about real important foodstuffs such as rice and maize?" This positive attitude towards agricultural products may convey the impression that Hai||om are very keen gardeners themselves. However, in most cases it is not the production but simply the consumption of these food items that is on people's minds when making statements like the above. That is not to say, however, that Hai||om economic activity is determined by an inability to overcome the urge for immediate consumption.

There is plenty of visible evidence for the fact that some delayed consumption is a common feature of Hai||om everyday life today. Tobacco pipes and self-made cigarettes are usually not finished in one go but are extinguished in the sand for further consumption later in the day. Hai||om customarily store the wild orange, *!no-e*, underground, usually in old burrows. The *!no-e* are collected before they are ripe and are left to ripen in the ground, thereby preventing animals (or other humans) from eating them as they would if they were left to ripen on the tree (see Lee 1979:483 for

the same practice among !Kung). Another delayed consumption of the short-term type regularly occurs when Hai||om during the dry season have to go a long way to reach a rich mangetti grove. Mangettis may then be brought back from such a gathering expedition for consumption over some days. A long-term delay occurs especially with regard to scarce goods. Two incidents may illustrate this. In 1992 on a visit to ≠Gîseb I gave some sugar to Shortib who to my surprise went to his hut and got a small packet of coffee which is not available anywhere near ≠Gîseb. When I inquired about the origin of the coffee, he said that he had brought it with him when he moved from the Tsumeb area to ≠Gîseb almost two years ago. But since they had not got any sugar in the meantime, he had kept it for this moment when there would be sugar. In another instance at Sanab in 1993 I was recording possessions people kept in containers and calabashes when I came across two calabashes in which two women were keeping melon and pumpkin seeds. As Koites explained to me, they had received the seeds at a place called Tsaaurab when they were helping with the harvest there - an event I had witnessed two years earlier. Since the area they had cleared for gardening was as yet small, they had used only about half of the seeds and would keep the rest for next season. These episodes contradict the image of a "Bushman" as someone who cannot but follow his or her immediate drives of the moment (see Rohlwink 1973:17). It suggests that Hai||om are prepared to suspend consumption if it makes sense, which it does in these situations but which it does not in many other instances that are characterized by sharing obligations, by high mobility or by a lack of storage facilities.

There is also more systematic evidence for delayed consumption. More than a third of all field-owning Hai||om settlements in the north of |Gomais, have millet storage baskets (see appendix 3). In almost all camps Hai||om keep a few chickens although rarely any livestock. At Botos, ≠Aokhumb in 1993 made a storage basket for mangetti nuts. Garden returns at Botos did not warrant the making of a millet storage basket but since ≠Aokhumb had imitated the form of these baskets for his mangetti storage, it seemed as if he wanted an equivalent to the Owambo inventory for his

camp.²⁰

There is, however, some evidence that may be seen as indicative of a lack of concern for forward planning. When Jakob repaired an axe for us, I told him to join us in the evening because we were cooking meat. He did not show up that night but only the next day when there was no meat left and we could only offer him bread. He seemed not greatly disturbed by this but said "Yesterday's meat is yesterday's meat, today's bread is today's bread". The same man when desperate for some tobacco offered to exchange his bow and arrows for a packet of tobacco although, in our view, bow and arrows were much more valuable.

This attitude seemingly contradicts what has been said earlier about delayed consumption. However, both tendencies characterize the low "production aim" that has been observed among many hunter-gatherers who, as Peterson has recently remarked, combine "optimism about tomorrow" with "concerns of today" (cf. Peterson 1993:864). Immediate consumption may be postponed if there is no immediate concern. Optimism about tomorrow allows to focus on immediate consumption opportunities. Saving up coffee and wanting to have tobacco immediately at high cost can be seen as following the same principle, namely, to consider values of objects not so much in a relational manner of investment and exchange value but in a substantive manner of adequacy and access. In any case the social effect is not one of individual accumulation but one of facilitating access.

Hence, preparedness for delayed consumption does not necessarily lead to a delayed-return system. At the end of the 1992 gardening season several individuals at | Gormais gave us some of their bean harvest to store as seeds until the next season because they were worried that mice would eat the seeds, as had repeatedly happened in the past. But even when stored in a safe place a large portion of the seed became unusable during the year, eaten by a small fly. Furthermore, delayed consumption is acceptable

²⁰Note that this basket was made with sticks rather than strings of bark or leaf. This meant that its contents were not concealed and that it could not be used for grain instead of mangettis.

particularly when it does not require considerable advance input. Gardens at | Gomaïs and on cattleposts or farms are established with little labour input. They are usually kept within the area set aside for huts and protected against livestock by fences. To clear weeds and to plant the seeds only requires a few days of work and once a garden has been established it is basically run as an immediate-return enterprise. People forage in their gardens by checking on a day-to-day basis on individual plants that are already ripe which are then harvested, processed and consumed. This is partly a reaction to other people stealing from gardens, which is said to be the greatest danger to a good return from a garden. This, as I will show in more detail in the next chapter, follows very much the general patterns of sharing, demand sharing and attempts to avoid sharing obligations. At | Gomaïs most gardeners, but above all those who take from other people's gardens, therefore treat garden fruits as if they were growing in the bush. At | Gomaïs only two individuals are practising more intensive gardening, i.e. they spend most of their time and energy on the gardens. In both cases the price they have had to pay is one of relative isolation from the camp at large with most of their relations outside | Gomaïs.²¹

The amount of effort put into gardening differs individually as does the work invested by Hai||om who have larger fields in settlements to the north of | Gomaïs. In many cases Hai||om are supported with food aid by local Owambo in their initial creation of a settlement (building huts, clearing a field). Once the homestead has been established, the Hai||om tend to work in Owambo fields for daily or weekly food rations spending little time on their own gardens. Hence agriculture is effectively turned into an immediate-

²¹In one of these cases a man left the main camp and is now gardening at a cattle post where his daughter lives with an Owambo worker. This movement followed an incident in which he was accused of poisoning an old woman in the camp by giving her some food. This led two young men who were in a son-in-law relation to the woman to burn the hut of the accused and chase him away. The other good gardener was not regarded as a close relative nor very much liked by most Hai||om living at | Gomaïs. Since he was closely associated with the white administration (police, army, farm management) he, and his garden, were in a secure position.

return activity.²²

It is the garden products that all Hai||om value and it is for immediate access that many Hai||om do agricultural work. In many ways they therefore plant without harvesting. Their focus is on the accessibility of garden harvest often disregarding the delayed return factor involved. All Hai||om whom I came in contact with were planting, or had planted at some stage in the past, but in no case was the attempt being made to cultivate any of the fruit found in the bush. But there are many attempts to forage on planted resources. In several cases the seeds of fruit we had given away (notably apples) were planted by Hai||om in an attempt to get access to this fruit despite our statement that they could only expect a very delayed return (after several years) or even none (in the case of apples) because these things would not grow in this place. Since the input was negligible they found it worthwhile to give it a try anyway. At | Gomais the most popular cultivated crop is maize although millet grows better and is more reliable. The reason is not only that maize is more prestigious but, as it was put to me: "Maize is much less work, you break it off, cook it and eat it. Millet is a lot of work."

The most common strategy, therefore, is labour in the fields of Owambo. Most places with a large Hai||om population are still remote in the sense that there are no schools or wage labour opportunities. Consequently,

²²The data in appendix 3 give an indication as to how much planting the ≠Akhoe Hai||om do today in their own gardens. Hai||om do not distinguish terminologically between a field of crops (several Hai||om field I have seen were about 7000 square metres = almost 2 acres) and a small garden (sometimes as small as 2 square meters = a two meter row of maize or millet). However, for comparative purposes two types of gardens can be distinguished. Firstly, the fields of settlements north of | Gomais, the work on which draws on the Owambo communal structure for inputs (communal land, seed, plough and hoe). And secondly, those of the | Gomais area and farms further to the south which are somewhat restricted in size due to private ownership of land but which profit from the commercial orientation of the land owners who sometimes provide a limited market outlet, opportunities to purchase tools and other inputs, and access to free development aid.

many Owambo living in the area are either absentee farmers who employ some of their relatives to look after their fields and herds or they decide to stay on the farm but send their children to relatives living near a school. In either case there is a shortage of labour at many of these remote places which is partly compensated for by employing "Bushmen" for daily or weekly food rations. The most common tasks carried out in the agricultural cycle have been included in figure 2.2. In the course of the year, Hai||om men may be involved in ploughing, hoeing, harvesting and threshing but also in clearing an area for new fields and in making baskets for storing millet. Throughout the year Hai||om men are hired for building huts and enclosures as well as for making wooden tools such as mortars and pestles. Women are also involved in planting, hoeing, harvesting and threshing. They are then hired for female occupations such as winnowing and stamping millet at all stages of the year. The most time-consuming tasks are hoeing (for men and women), stamping millet (for women) and looking after cattle (for men). The herding of cattle occurs irregularly in the course of transhumant migration but often involves journeys lasting for several weeks or months. It is mostly done by boys and unmarried young men.

Due to the influx of Kwanyama-speaking herders and cheap labourers from Angola and due to the improvement of the infrastructure the scarcity of labour is not as great as it used to be. As the value of labour decreases, so does the willingness of Owambo farmers to provide assistance to neighbouring "Kwankala", in terms of ploughing and providing seeds in exchange for labour assistance. When surveying Hai||om settlements to the east of Ondangwa, it was repeatedly pointed out to me that Owambo were often no longer, or too late in the season, assisting their Hai||om neighbours setting their land in order because they requested prolonged periods of service in the Owambo fields. Since Hai||om have largely left all delayed-return aspects of agriculture to their patrons, they are disadvantaged and become "Kwankala" in the sense of poor agriculturalists. Furthermore, they are pushed further into a close dependency relation with their patrons because, when they have joint fields with their patrons rather than distinct

fields of their own, the chances are better that the field will be ploughed and tilled together with that of the Owambo. None of the Hai||om settlements I visited had ploughs or draught animals readily at their disposal. People often had their own hoes but usually not enough to allow all adults in a camp to work at the same time unless hoes were provided by Owambo. In several cases Hai||om have given the deteriorating conditions as a reason for the fact that they have abandoned their fields and settlements. |Gomais is one of the places they are attracted to. Nangolo, a young man who had stayed with Owambo for most of his life up to 1992, told me in 1994 that he had no intention of going back to work in the fields of the Owambo because "that work is bad, it makes your back ache". The parallel to Hokorob's statement quoted at the beginning of this chapter is striking. It is when the back starts to hurt, i.e. in a situation when pain outstrips gain that a new subsistence activity is taken up.

Keeping Livestock

The advent and incorporation of cattle into the "San" economy is at the very centre of debates (such as the recent Kalahari debate) about the implications of long-term economic changes. Archaeological and archival records relating to the distribution of cattle have repeatedly been examined in depth in order to establish whether they support an integrationist or an isolationist view of these changes. Whether an early bone discovery is an indication of the presence of cattle or of game, whether "oxen" or "onions" is the correct reading of an early document were more than just side issues in the recent debate (see Lee and Guenther 1991, 1993, Solway and Lee 1990, Wilmsen and Denbow 1990, Wilmsen 1989). Unfortunately, the detailed and necessary discussion of these sources was not followed by an equally thorough argument as to what the social implications are for a local group of hunter-gatherers who share a place with livestock, be they their own or those of others. It seems unlikely that the essence of social relations,

or of ethnic identity for that matter, can be derived from the mere existence of cattle in an area, even if that existence can be proved.

A central ethnographic feature discussed in the context of the social implications of livestock (mainly cattle but also goats) entering the Kalahari is the so-called *mafisa* system, a loan arrangement between livestock owner and herder. It has been repeatedly reported as a characteristic feature of the patron-client relationship between Bushpeople and neighbouring pastoralists, especially Tswana and Herero (Lee 1979:407, Guenther 1986d:350-3, Vierich 1987 [1982]:217). In the Tswana *mafisa* system, Bantu-speaking cattle owners may come into a remote area with their cattle and leave them there for the "San" or other minority groups that do not own cattle to look after. In its best-known form the herdsmen are allowed to use the milk and, if a cow dies, also the meat for their consumption while the owner is away. On the owner's return they may also be paid a calf or two (cf. Lee 1979:407, London Missionary Society 1935:7). These loan arrangements in effect facilitated lasting patron-client relations as a division of the herd led to a distribution of herders among cattle owners, thus perpetuating the system (London Missionary Society 1935:8). It should be noted, though, that *mafisa* arrangements have been declining since the time they have been reported and that in the past these arrangements existed primarily within Bantu-speaking pastoralist groupings rather than interethnically between pastoralists and foragers.²³ San watching over cattle may refer to these cattle as "*mafisa*" although typical institutionalized aspects of the *mafisa* of earlier times may not be included (Hitchcock 1990:130, see also Schapera 1938:247).²⁴ It seems that from the perspective of cattle owners herding

²³Cattle-lending is still widely practised among Owambo. Since many cattle-owners are taking up jobs outside the communal areas, the practice is likely to continue. According to a national survey the average number of cattle owned by households in Katutura (the formerly "black township" of Windhoek) is more than double that of households in Namibia's rural north (TCCF 1992:142).

²⁴For more details on *mafisa* arrangements see Schapera 1938:246-8; Gibson 1962:629; Wilmsen 1989:99).

arrangements with "San" were not represented as *mafisa* since *mafisa* involves a partnership with the herder who may ask for *mafisa* cattle and to whom the cattle "virtually belong temporarily" (London Missionary Society 1935:5).

Among the Hai||om we find what may be called an inverse *mafisa* system. Here it is often the case that those Hai||om who own a few goats or even cattle (which is exceptional) leave their animals with the dominant Owambo agro-pastoralists to look after. The Owambo are allowed to use whatever the animal produces including the offspring (although this is often a matter of debate and conflict between Hai||om and Owambo).

However, what at first glance appear to be two opposite practices follow the same underlying dynamics of "excorporation"²⁵. The "classic *mafisa*", as documented for !Kung - Tswana relations, and the "inverse *mafisa*" among Hai||om and Owambo are two examples, but by no means the only ones, of how to deal with livestock as a form of delayed return that becomes available to foragers in their interaction with neighbouring groups. The *mafisa* system provides a regular surplus of milk (and sometimes meat). The techniques of cattle tending are readily incorporated and to some degree provide an alternative to hunting and gathering. In contrast to this, the underlying strategy which requires the need to accumulate, to appropriate and to secure delayed return in the way agro-pastoralists do, is excorporated because it remains in the hands of the pastoralists. The consumption of the products of a delayed-return activity (such as cattle keeping) is controlled and channelled from outside the group which effectively turns cattle herding into an immediate-return activity that provides direct access to milk and meat but no long-term investment or accumulation.

As a consequence far-reaching changes in the arrangement of internal

²⁵I introduce the term "excorporation" here to emphasize that economic accumulation is not entirely excluded in the sense of being erased but is placed outside and beyond the reach of the group. It is not necessarily externalized and eliminated permanently but may be re-incorporated at some stage of the politico-economic process. Hai||om social groups are, however, only "corporate" in a very general sense of the word (see chapter three).

social relations which are required by delayed-return systems (Woodburn 1988:57-8) are prevented or at least subdued, for example: exclusive ownership and controlled channels of exchange, authoritative control of economic returns, the abandoning of sharing obligations. Consequently those "San" who acquire livestock suffer under this social constellation, for example, the exclusion from social solidarity, being the object of gossip, accusations of witchcraft or other negative forms of behaviour. The problems such people face when an attempt is made to take up an independent herder existence are well known (see, for example, Lee 1979:413, Vierich 1987 [1982]:219).

Hai||om inverse *mafisa* is also a form of excorporation because only in this way can general sharing and rules of exchange (guided by kinship) be kept up while still retaining some sort of accumulation and delayed consumption. Although it is not recognized as a system by the actors, it is an institutionalized excorporation practice: externally, individuals are free to move; it allows for movement either seasonally or more permanently especially to work on commercial farms further to the south, or to visit relatives - regardless of whether one owns cattle and goats or not. It may even enhance mobility since a goat pays for a trip for two to the Ndonga administrative centre (where IDs are issued and pensions registered). Internally, Hai||om who acquire livestock can still continue to maintain sharing practices with various kinsmen because the immediate pressure to slaughter and to share the meat of the animals is taken off their shoulders due to the placing of the animals with the Owambo. To maintain relations of exchange and of sharing as well as entitlements to social support bears directly on the identity of any individual. Individual appropriations of economic assets, especially interested future assets, are directly associated with non-Hai||om behaviour, typical of the Owambo and other farmers and herders.²⁶

²⁶There are other economic dynamics at work. Risk reduction is a relevant aspect not just for rich cattle owners who want to disperse their cattle as a protection against taxation or decimation due to disease and

Considering the number of factors involved, it appears that we are not dealing with two "systems" which can be easily opposed and delimited from the diversity of cases. As Lee has pointed out for the *mafisa* system between !Kung and Tswana, it is not always absent landlords who place their cattle in this way but resident Herero and Tswana cattle owners may make similar arrangements, either long-term or short-term, with local !Kung (Lee 1979:407).

Similarly, among the Hai||om livestock in some cases are kept in cooperation with Owambo and occasionally Hai||om without cattle engage in herding for Owambo cattle owners. Other motivations come into it as well. A case in point is the fact that some Hai||om were more or less forced to leave their goats with local Owambo when the army presence and armed conflict in the area drove them away from their land towards the farms in the south beyond the cattle disease fence which prohibits the movement of livestock to the south. Finally, in both cases there are individual !Kung and Hai||om who keep their own livestock without engaging in a *mafisa* or reverse *mafisa* arrangement (partly through outside support, see Marshall and Ritchie 1984:123-57).

Diversity occurs not only in interethnic contact but is already prevalent in the internal practices of cattle lending and cattle herding among pastoralists. Among the Tswana, cattle are lent out to lower-status kinsmen but also to higher-status persons such as husbands and fathers (Schapera 1938:220). In some cases this is said to help the cattle recipient to build up his own herd (Schapera 1930:294). This was common as a reason for cattle borrowing among Nama or Boers (see Russel 1976:192). In other cases it is

raiding. It is also, in a less institutionalized manner, relevant for any cattle holder who seeks security in mutual cattle lending with a friend or in moving to the cattlepost of a more powerful cattle owner (Schapera 1938:253). Economic efficiency is another aspect. Since looking after livestock takes away time and labour from other subsistence pursuits cattle owners are discouraged from herding a few head of cattle independently. Similarly, the changes in water availability (in terms of the changing legal status of borehole ownership) has been shown to affect incorporation and exclusion of marginal cattle holders into a large local herd (Peters 1984).

presented as a strategy to keep low-status people in their place (Comaroff 1985:69, Wilmsen 1989:99). This seems to have been a common practice in the highly-stratified Tswana society of the previous and the present century.²⁷ We find contradictory reports as to whether the San themselves thought the *mafisa* was favourable for them or not (Marshall and Ritchie 1984:123, cf. Solway and Lee 1990:117). The existence of a *mafisa* or reverse *mafisa* type arrangement in itself gives no clue as to whether the practice is beneficial for the non-cattle owners involved. In either case the cattle-owning party may use the arrangement to create political and economic dependency but the cattle-receiving party, as well, may try to outwit the cattle givers (Schapera 1938:248). The Hai||om cases suggest, however, that reverse *mafisa* is irreversible in the sense that it does not lead to a separate herd owned by a "San" person. Rather, the next likely step is an arrangement in which the "Bushman" provides his labour for the herd owned by someone else. This patron-client relation gives him a less material, and less secure, claim to assets accumulated in the herd in the form of assistance from the herd-owner.

Woodburn's immediate - delayed return opposition allows us to predict some of the difficulties that are likely to occur in changes from one system to the other. Foragers with an immediate-return economy can be expected to find it more difficult to become cattle owners than to become cattle herders. It is not the novelty of subsistence techniques associated with pastoralism (or agriculture) that causes problems but it is the social implications involved. But as Vierich's account confirms, it seems that "the more dependent a family is on livestock and agricultural products, the less

²⁷Note that the *mafisa* worked well for impoverished Herero refugees from Namibia (South West Africa) to build up herds themselves in Botswana (Gibson 1962:629) while the Bushmen under the same ecological conditions and with long-standing *mafisa* arrangements had far too few head of cattle to qualify for support from the (Tswana dominated) administration to increase the cattle population in general (Guenther 1986b:310). I take this to be another indication of the importance of social grounding that goes together not only with *mafisa* arrangements but also with nation state politics.

likely they are to actually own livestock or plant their own fields" (1987 [1982]:217). By and large this can also be observed among Hai||om. In 1954 on the day when 24 men, 33 women and 21 children were expelled from Namutoni in Etosha, the Native Commissioner of Owamboland counted 42 head of cattle, 6 donkeys, 120 goats and 47 fowls that were owned by "Bushmen" (Namibia National Archives 1954). This local herd is larger than any Hai||om herd I have come across during my research. This fact remains puzzling only as long as we construe the situation as one of two separate systems. In terms of social practice it is unproblematic that hunter-gatherers with many links to a neighbouring delayed-return economy have more opportunities for expropriating economic assets (such as livestock) and the authority structures required to manage these assets than hunter-gatherers without these links. At the same time agropastoralists seem to be more inclined to incorporate clients than fellow cattle-owners. Conversely, hunter-gatherers who can satisfy their sharing obligations on the basis of secure access to land and its resources as in the case of Etosha Hai||om may be able to divert social attention from individual delayed-return enterprises such as keeping livestock. Current-day Hai||om whose everyday practice is geared towards extending their access to exactly these areas of subsistence not only have systematic but also pragmatic difficulties in engaging in delayed-return activities themselves.

Mobility

It is striking that, despite their reputation as "nomads", Hai||om seem to be much more confined in their movements than members of other groups. Hai||om have not expanded their territory to the disadvantage of others but were being dispossessed of their land by other incoming groups. In a more general sense Hai||om have remained rather parochial in their economic endeavours with only very limited participation in the national trade network, migrant labour and urban occupation. The overall small

population and stigmatization from the outside provide part of the explanation for this development. However, there are also corresponding processes that can be observed on the level of everyday practice. As has been noted above successful profit-oriented and delayed-return exploitation of natural resources goes hand in hand with at least temporary separation from the larger home community while maintaining vital links that ensure security in times of drought or other forms of crisis. This applies to professional liquor producers at |Gomais as much as to Owambo transhumant pastoralists (see Tapscott 1990).

Hai||om individuals who expand their gardening activities, as has been shown, are forced to move away or to seek social distance by outside protection. I suggest that the reason why Hai||om are less prepared to take on the required separation and distance, lies at the level of institutionalized social practices. While agropastoralists in sub-Saharan Africa have developed a number of related practices of splitting, displacing and ejecting social segments (see Kopytoff 1989[1987]), southern African hunter-gatherers have instead developed practices of merging, accommodating and connecting individuals across groupings. That is to say, it is easy for a Hai||om to extend demands and to direct demands to others and at the same time difficult to evade these demands by segmentation. Although strategies of temporary separation are important for Hai||om in conflict resolution and under ecological stress, these are socially quite different from segmentation processes that lead to new lasting social groups. In most contexts, Hai||om can rely on their shared social practices which allow individuals to engage in a number of different social relationships. Therefore it is unlikely for any Hai||om individual or group to move the "frontier" forward in the way that centralized or segmented societies encourage their members to do (see Kopytoff 1989[1987]:17). However, on the other side of the "internal African frontier" as it were, Hai||om practices enable individuals and groups of people to link up with neighbouring social groups and their economies even though these may be governed by a different logic. By contrast the movements in segmentary agropastoralist groups are usually replicative and

conservative (cf. Kopytoff 1989[1987]:27).

A comparison with the !Kung case suggests that the Hai||om have ceased to be full time nomadic hunter-gatherers not primarily because of the deteriorating ecological conditions nor because of the external pressures to make them sedentary. Rather, it is the fact that they have actively sought access to products of other modes of subsistence. Their mixed economy exhibits a logic that relies on an attempt to gain extended access to a number of resources rather than intensively exploit only a few. The way in which they embrace others' delayed-return activities and turn them into immediate-return activities seems very similar in all their economic pursuits, be they hunting and gathering or other subsistence strategies.

With regard to the externally defined boundary between "communal" and "commercial" areas, Hai||om show a high degree of mobility as they carry out their subsistence strategies moving between different places and different conditions. This seems to suggest that they "oscillate between the world of the hunter-gatherer and that of the farmer and pastoralist" (Vierich 1987 [1982]:220), or, in Woodburn's terms, between an immediate-return system and a delayed-return system. But closer investigation shows that their engagement in one of the "worlds" is brought about and constructed by their practice in the other.

The immediate-return / delayed-return distinction provides a shorthand summary of the distinctive ways in which Hai||om forager-workers on one hand and Owambo and white farmers on the other hand exploit resources while living on the same land. However, the picture becomes much more complicated when there is intensive interaction between groups characterized by different modes of social organization. It appears from the Hai||om case that economic activity is not only motivated and explainable on the grounds of the expected or actual time interval between input and output (a possible formal definition of the immediate/delayed-return distinction).

Collecting responses to the question as to why Hai||om wanted to have gardens (or garden fruits) when there were so many mangettis in the

world, leads to the conclusion that there is a major flaw in many arguments about foragers being an affluent society. These arguments have focused on problems of calculating and comparing abstract ratios of work input versus output of goods and have projected these back onto the ethnography as if they were the constitutive features that motivate social practice. A totalizing comparison of the overall balance of a hunter-gatherer economy as opposed to other economies distorts the picture when it comes to explain the actions of Hai||om as individuals or as a social group. In everyday practice the advantages of having access to planted resources are obvious because other means of assessment are used than an abstract calculus that balances input and output. What seems to matter in practice is not low versus high production aims but close range versus extended range of access.

Suspending (at least for the moment) the input-output notion of a bounded economic system in favour of an actor-centred perspective, we see that the Hai||om of today are preoccupied with extending their access to products beyond those brought about by hunting and gathering. It is necessary at this stage to differentiate "extending" from "expanding" access, the latter being a common feature of many agropastoralist economies. Extending access is characterized by attempts to establish multifaceted links with neighbouring social groups, especially those with a delayed-return system on the basis of an immediate-return economy. Hai||om do not have the social resources to control the production and distribution of items and services they gain through extended access. While the link-up to a delayed-return system has been achieved, Hai||om in many ways rely on the group they are cooperating with.²⁸ They have not moved to a delayed-return system or halfway towards it. Nor do they switch between a delayed-return mode and a immediate-return mode. Rather, they now rely on economic

²⁸The Hadza, by contrast, appear - either out of deliberation or due to stigmatization from outside - to be largely unsuccessful in accomplishing this kind of link-up with the economic pursuits of their neighbours (see Woodburn 1988). The case of the Batúa "pygmies" of Zaire, however, shows that a link-up with, in this case, Baotó agriculturalists is possible despite strong stigmatization (see Schultz 1991).

returns which are no longer generated (and controlled) locally and directly. The extended path of access is indirect, going through other economic systems and strategies controlled by other social groups that can quantitatively and qualitatively influence the final outcome. Although in many instances this involves greater distances in physical terms (to markets, communication points, ecologically distributed resources), this need not be the case (see Peterson 1991).

From a practice perspective this is an extended form of access, or more precisely a remote form of access that lacks remote control. While the institutionalized movement between different parts of Hai||om country provides some control over access through physical mobility, this is no longer possible with regard to the remote returns of neighbouring delayed-return economies. In order to achieve remote control over these returns, social mobility is required that can only be obtained through constructing common ground with members of social groups that operate along delayed-return principles. These processes of social mobility are the subject of the following chapter.

Conclusion

This chapter has documented Hai||om subsistence flexibility and their ability to complement hunting and gathering with handicrafts and wage labour, with agricultural work and livestock herding. It has emerged that Hai||om are not on the whole in the position to engage independently in agricultural and pastoral production. They are, however, in many ways tied into the delayed-return enterprises of neighbouring groups. It has been shown that for some time in the past as well as today, Hai||om actively foster their involvement in these economic pursuits since they value access to the products of delayed-return activities. In their attempt to gain access to these products they rely on social practices established against a background of hunting and gathering. As a consequence they extend their

access but at the same time relinquish some of the control they previously held over economic processes.

Chapter Three

Modes of Transaction and Concepts of Common Ground

Introduction

The analysis of changes in Hai||om modes of subsistence in the last chapter has pointed repeatedly to the importance of modes of transaction in a context in which relations with outsiders are intensified. Hai||om hunting practices pointed to a history of intensive trade. Current patterns of gathering mangetti and other fruits are to a large extent geared towards exchange. Hai||om engagement in commercial enterprises seems to be defined above all through the position of participants in transactions. The present chapter investigates how Hai||om construe the modes of transaction such as sharing, gift-exchange, barter and monetized exchange in which they are engaged and how this affects their internal and external social relations. Focusing on social practice I will examine how Hai||om put existing social categories to work in order to gain access to a number of different modes of subsistence and in order to manipulate channels of transaction. Given the importance that Hai||om put on "access" rather than "output" it seems necessary not only to go beyond the modes of production involved and to look more closely at the modes of transaction but also to see how Hai||om social institutions are transformed as a consequence of linking up with neighbouring groups of agropastoralists.

With regard to the analysis of modes of transaction the perspective suggested here is a practice-oriented critique of both formalist as well as substantivist theories.

Hai||om Categories and Their Sociological Correlates

Given the overall diversity of Hai||om subsistence and their individual flexibility in realizing a mixed economy, it is not surprising that Hai||om internal and external social relationships do not so much rely on different roles and positions taken in subsistence pursuits as on those taken in transactions. Apart from blacksmithing and hunting with bow and arrows which remain purely male activities, adults and adolescents of both sexes and of all life-stages may engage in any of the subsistence strategies described in chapter one. Hai||om identify few occupations such as *kurukhoeb* (artisan) or *!gaiaob* (medicine man). A number of foreign terms are taken over as loan words, e.g. *gombisman* (kitchen worker from Afrikaans "kombuisman"), *sondagua* (soldier, from German, Afrikaans or English) *mister* (official, teacher or pastor from English "mister" or "minister"), *swesta* or *lerte* (nurse from German "Schwester" and Owambo "omuleli"). Given the productivity of Hai||om morphology, new descriptors are easily created by combining any verb with the noun *khoe* (person) including *kurekhoei* (person who herds livestock) or *xorekhoei* (person who gathers food). But these terms do not have wide currency and are not widespread enough to be called social categories. There is no Hai||om equivalent to our distinction between "hunter-gatherers", "agriculturalists" and "pastoralists", nor between "villagers" and "forest people" (Turnbull 1965). The only production-based categorization that is widely shared is that between *sisun-aon* (people with [wage] labour) and *sondron*¹ (out of work

¹There are two possible etymologies of this word. One relates it back to the Herero word *ozosondoro*, used in the early colonial period to refer to have-nots (Gewald pers. comm.), and further back to the Dutch/Afrikaans word "sonder" (without). The other one relates to the Dutch/Afrikaans word "sonde" (sin). Although to have no livestock and no work is part of the characteristics of a *sondro* the word is mostly applied to men (less frequently to women) who used to be in full-time employment but then lost their jobs and are now just hanging around waiting for another job to come along, usually causing trouble, sometimes stealing. Therefore the association is closer to "sinner" or "trouble maker" than to "have-not". This is supported

people).

Hence on the whole Hai||om social categories are not so much based on roles taken in the production process but on the individual positions with regard to the consumption and exchange of products. Even the common distinction between *sisun-aon* and *sondron* seems to connote above all "access to work and cash" as opposed to "likely to steal", that is, the consumption or distribution aspect of these positions. More generally, the social units which provide the background for social relations in Hai||om social life are more or less explicitly linked to certain modes of exchange. These units are (with their preliminary glosses) *!haos* (ethnic group), || *gâus* (camp), *mûhogon* (kin), *!nares* (surname group). They will be discussed in turn in this chapter.

The question to be investigated below is how exactly are these social roles and units construed and, more fundamentally, how are Hai||om social categories related to the social relations on the ground? In an attempt to answer these questions anthropological analyses have tried to provide frameworks for the action of social subjects. Approaches which have taken emic linguistic terms as evidence for "cultural concepts" have been repeatedly criticized for assuming a tight fit or even a causal relation between the two. In his criticism of Geertz' assumption that language represents mental constructs, Moerman (1988:88) has pointed out that cultural anthropologists who follow the Geertzian strategy give no place to the social organization of the situations in which language is used and largely discount the actions of purposive subjects in everyday life.

Partly in opposition to this trend, the study of social units which has dominated British and French social anthropology has for a long time relied on the false assumption that "relationship terms reflected existing social facts, especially in the sphere of kinship ideology" and that there was a "necessary correspondence between the structure of a society's relationship

by the fact that straying cattle, especially tame oxen gone wild, may be called *sondro*. The word for "sinner" in a church context, however, is || *orekhoe*.

terminology, and the structure of the alliance relationships among its social groupings" (Barnard and Good 1984:11-2, original emphasis). The relation between outward behaviour, ideals and "collective representations", must be a matter of empirical research.

An alternative view that has developed from critique of these two paradigms centres on the notion of social deixis and the pragmatic use of language in the construction of concepts and social units. In pragmatics "deixis" is used "to refer to the ways in which linguistic elements can refer to, or can only be interpreted by knowing, certain aspects of the communicative event in which those elements are used" (Brown and Levinson 1979:311). "Social deixis" goes beyond the purely linguistic "person deixis" (referring to grammatical person) in that it is "concerned with the social roles and identities which these [grammatical] 'persons' may have" (Zeitlyn 1993:208). It also goes beyond a definition of social (including ethnic) group membership as disclosed in absolute indicators of identity or individual affiliation with a group (cf. Barth 1969). "Social deixis" focuses on the relational aspect of two or more interacting persons who share (or refuse to share) a common social identification (see Giles 1979:252-3). It is hoped that analyses of social deixis account for the fact that there is only a partial overlap between social categories and social relations on the ground as well as between concepts and linguistic units. But it is also hoped that further insights into the nature of social relations can be drawn from this fact.

As a first step Zeitlyn has proposed that "we must relate a term to the set of people of whom that term may be predicated rather than the other way round" (Zeitlyn 1993:200). I want to investigate Hai||om social deixis in terms similar to those suggested by Zeitlyn but extended in two directions. Firstly, by incorporating ethnic reference as another way to categorize people, I want to develop Zeitlyn's suggestion that we should look at the entire domain of social deixis, including kin, names, and titles (Zeitlyn 1993:201). Secondly, I will include Hai||om transactions as non-linguistic references to a social relative since they, together with the vocative

use of names and kinship terms, contribute to the construction of social relationships. Since the second extension may be more controversial than the first, some introductory remarks are necessary with regard to the current state of anthropological theories of transactions.

Sharing, Gift-Exchange and Barter in Hunter-Gatherer Studies

"'Sharing' is an emotive word" as Barnard (1993:30) has pointed out, and so are other terms for transactions employed in anthropological theory of "exchange".² This has been shown in the discussion about the "essence" of kinship summarized by Barnard and Good (Barnard and Good 1984:161-89). In early ethnography observations of sharing behaviour invoked notions of "primitive communism" (cf. Lee 1988, Barnard 1993) or "Edelkommunismus", lit. "noble communism" (Unterkötter n.d.:6) implying total communal ownership and wrongly denying to hunter-gatherers concepts of individual property (cf. Barnard and Woodburn 1988:10-1). In more recent writing, notions of generosity and altruism have been de-emphasized in order to point out other aspects of sharing as practised among many hunter-gatherers: demand sharing, strategies to avoid sharing, and sharing obligations (Peterson 1993). As Price has pointed out, this is misleading in that it describes sharing in the hunter-gatherer context in terms of the notion of a "pure gift", a notion characteristic of complex societies (Price 1975).

"Exchange" and its frequent synonym "gift exchange" often involve ideas of the mystical participation of the donor in a gift (Mauss 1969 [1925], Parry 1986) which are at odds with the de-emphasizing of the donor in the exchange relations of immediate-return systems and the lack of long-term and high-investment exchange partnerships in these contexts (Barnard and

²The term "transaction" itself is often associated with a specific theoretical stance of "transactionalism" often carrying an emotive load among anthropologists.

Woodburn 1988:27). Formalist analyses of transactions among hunter-gatherers were aimed at overcoming loaded "cultural" terms for the benefit of largely quantitative comparative analyses of "energy production, consumption, and expenditure" (Smith and Winterhalder 1981:3). However, in order to achieve this, formal models largely ignore the moral connotations that in practice are often inseparable from exchange but that at the same time elude formalization (see Bettinger 1991:105-6). Sahlins' model of "the sociology of primitive exchange" may have been so influential because it presented an essentially substantivist account of exchange stressing its moral dimension (cf. Bettinger 1991:191-2).

Sahlins distinguished three modes of reciprocity on the basis of a continuum of increasing social distance and decreasing moral commitment. His model treats gift exchange (balanced reciprocity) as the baseline on which sharing (generalized reciprocity) and barter (negative reciprocity) (Sahlins 1988[1972]:195, 215) are mapped although strictly speaking both are in their extreme defined by their lack of reciprocity. "Sharing" is insufficiently isolated as a discrete category as it is subsumed either under "pooling" and "redistribution" or under "generalized reciprocity" (Sahlins 1988[1972]:188, 191-2). Another rigid distinction, namely that between "primitive" exchange and "modern" flow of goods, is fundamental to Sahlins' model (1988[1972]:187) but problematic with regard to the intertwining of the two in many current settings. A categorical distinction of this kind has been maintained in Marxist models which seek to differentiate gift exchange from bartering and selling (or commodity exchange) and two different moralities (interdependent versus independent transactors) that characterize these two modes (see Gregory 1982). While this approach has rightly been criticized for its unrealistic rigidity (Appadurai 1986:11-2; Parry and Bloch 1989:8-10), it goes beyond the early substantivists' and Marxists' evolutionary differentiation between "socially embedded" economies before capitalism and a "disembedded" economy following "the great transformation" (Polanyi 1988[1944]) by incorporating moral attitudes into the analysis of both. This aspect has been developed by Bloch who

maintains a strong link between kinship studies and studies of exchange suggesting that it is the role of kinship to tolerate unbalanced exchange and to allow for exchange that has no calculated returns (cf. Bloch 1973).

By incorporating the temporal aspect of the transaction Bloch moves away from what Bourdieu has criticized as the "objectivist" tendency of analyses that take a synoptic (be it formalist or substantivist) rather than a practice-oriented view of transactions (cf. Bourdieu 1976 [1972]:217-27). A more comprehensive attempt to design a "processual" analysis is that of Appadurai (1986). Based on the work of Kopytoff (1986), Appadurai suggested that moral issues are at the centre of all attempts to politically channel goods from one mode of exchange into another, to commercialize them or to "singularize" them (Appadurai 1986:17). From there it is not far to come to the conclusion that transactions themselves, in "tournaments of value" (cf. Appadurai 1986:21-2) or elsewhere in social practice, play an important role in the definition of social units. Transactions can establish the common ground that provides both the basis on which relationship terms are applied and on which modes of exchange are based.

Summarizing this very brief outline, attention needs to be drawn to the fact that many of the terminological distinctions that have been proposed for comparative purposes carry moral distinctions into the hunter-gatherer context which are not always appropriate for the analysis of these groups. While caution is needed in handling loaded concepts such as "sharing" or "egalitarianism", it is important not to omit the values and sentiments attached to transactional modes since they are part and parcel of the social action in question. We may accept Bettinger's affirmation that "sharing" and other forms of cooperative behaviour have an important function in risk-reduction and evolutionary adaptation (Bettinger 1991:124, 160). But this does not imply that the long-term adaptive effects of sharing or other forms of exchange can be treated as the "neutral" background on which the influence of "cultural norms" can then be measured (Bettinger 1991:106). In actual transactions the two are closely intertwined and mutually constitutive.

In sum, what Barnard and Good have said with regard to kinship

applies equally well to the analysis of transactions: many controversies in this field arise from the fact that "conceptual categories", "jural norms or preferences" and "collective or individual behaviour" have not been clearly distinguished as levels of analysis (1984:13). Barnard and Good insist that a full analysis has to cover all three levels since they are "not wholly independent of each other" (1984:13, original emphasis). It has only recently been pointed out that an analysis cannot but deal with all three levels not ultimately but imminently at all stages since they come into play at the observational level when we try to understand social action (cf. Zeitlyn 1993:199).

The situation is further complicated by the fact that not only in anthropological writing but also amongst hunter-gatherers like the Hai||om "sharing", as well as "giving" and "selling", are emotive words. The three Hai||om terms $\neq hûigu$ (sharing), *magu* (exchanging) and $\parallel amagu$ (selling) may be employed as conceptual categories for differentiating social action, as social markers or demands with reference to idealized types, or may be indirectly invoked through the appropriate behaviour.

Ethnic Deixis

By incorporating reference to ethnic identity into my investigation of "social deixis" I want to underline the fact that "ethnicity" is not only an object of political manipulation and channelization on the level of the nation state (see chapter one). In everyday contexts of personal interaction ethnic categories are employed in ways similar to the use of other social categories such as kin categories or names. In other words, any systematization of categories (including ethnic categories) has to start with the practice of attributing these categories. Ethnic identities are always attributed to ego or alter with regard to someone else who is or is not of the same ethnic identity. As the following cases show, the notion of *!haos* (ethnic group) is not dealt with in the abstract but only in relational constructions. In everyday conversation it

is mostly used in the phrase *dâ!haotsikhoe*, lit. "a person who does not belong to my ethnic group", parallel to similar phrases such as *dâ!atsikhoe* (a person from another place).

Case situation 1

[| Hoegub speaks better Owambo than Hai||om because he spent most of his youth in an Owambo homestead looking after cattle. His parents were both Hai||om but since he is tall and dark in outward appearance he does not strike one as a "Bushman". Consequently in a court hearing he is addressed in Owambo and by his Owambo name. When he is convicted he is put in prison together with four Owambo men. Here he recalls a fight they had in their cell.]

"One of the men told me to go away because he said I was spreading diseases like all Kwankala. I told him that we are not like that and that to be a Hai||om was not as bad as being an Owambo. Then one of the men attacked me and I hit him with my fist. But the Owambo men all stuck together and beat me up." (Fieldnotes G81, 9.4.91)

This case illustrates the stigmatization based on ethnic categories that "Bushman" suffer on the level of personal interaction. Hai||om know cases of stigmatization by white or Damara officials at the clinic or other public institutions.³ What is noteworthy is the fact that ethnic stereotypes may be invoked and stigmatize individuals even when they are not physically or linguistically distinctive.

Case situation 2

[An Owambo pastor working in the Ngandjera area says:]

"The Kwankala are not distinguishable in body stature, nor in their houses or kraals but as soon as one talks to them for a little while, they will start asking for this and that. They do not like to work but only to receive and they are fed maize and rice by us [i.e. the church]. They have cattle and gardens but they do not look after them properly. They go to the cuca shop [liquor bar] and in the meantime their cattle go into their gardens." (Fieldnotes AO2, 15.9.90)

³Not being able to wash oneself or to wear clean clothes is among the most frequent reasons, and sometimes excuses, for not going to the clinic or any administrative office since discrimination is feared.

In this case we had visited the south-west of what used to be called Owamboland, one of the areas in which "San" population had "disappeared" from the official records as they merged with Owambo. It shows that ethnic differentiation is not easily overcome and that acceptance by the majority group is difficult to achieve. A spurious integration is achieved by the fact that the Owambo notion of "Kwankala" has ethnic as well as social connotations. Although the etymology of the term may be non-discriminatory, relating to the "dwarf mongoose" as a totem (as suggested by Williams 1992:85), it is today and has been for a long time in the past clearly pejorative, as demonstrated by a host of usages such as "become poor or infertile", "become impoverished", "poor soil" (Tirronen 1986:165) and "spendthrift, one who lives by the day" (Turvey 1977:95). There are also racial connotations as in "omakwankalafufu - short, red, very curled hairs [sic]" (Turvey 1977:95). The pejorative meaning is also captured in a number of Owambo proverbs such as "Omukukuangala kefi na ngobe nande neikonge taifipo." ("The Bushman is not an owner of cattle, even if he got some it would die.") (Kuusi 1970:178).⁴ *Pace* Williams (1992:86) there is, however, a difference between, say, most European national stereotypes and the usage of the term "Kwankala", in that the latter may be used ethnically or non-ethnically. That is to say, "Kwankala" may be considered part of the Owambo ethnic group in an attempt to claim ethnic homogeneity and political control over a territory. In everyday interaction, however, the category of "Kwankala" may be used ethnically in an attempt to exclude certain people either for individual purposes, as in case one, or for political purposes (of "us" versus "them"), as in case two. Note that the non-linguistic referent to "Kwankala" is the distribution of handouts on the one hand and continual demands on the other hand.

The ethnic deixis of neighbouring groups, particularly in its

⁴As Siran has pointed out, the meaning of such a proverb critically depends on the conversational context which is unfortunately excluded in most compilations of proverbs including Kuusi's collection of Owambo proverbs (cf. Siran 1993:228, Kuusi 1970).

aggressive form as ethnic stereotypes against "Bushmen", penetrates into the self-image of Hai||om today (see chapter eight). It also perpetuates ethnic boundaries beyond the fostering of these boundaries by the now abandoned state policy of separate development. From the perspective of Hai||om social actors, ethnic deixis still constitutes a major obstacle for overcoming ethnic discrimination, notwithstanding the long-term effects of intermixture due to sexual contact, of language shift, and of "Bushmen" disappearing as a distinct group from the map of what used to be called Owamboland. On the interpersonal level there is no indication of Hai||om changing their ethnic identity into Owambo (or Damara or !Xû for that matter) apart from single cases of adoption.⁵

Hai||om are not only subject to ethnic deixis from outside but they also use ethnic deixis themselves. Utterances such as "This boy looks like a real !Xû [with peppercorn hair]" are part of everyday discourse. Mostly, these short remarks refer to physical appearance or dress, but sometimes also to activities. For instance, a woman who looked at a photograph that showed her pounding millet exclaimed, "I look like a real *sâukhoes* [lit. millet woman, ≠Akhoe living close to Owambo]". However, it would be misleading to construct a rule of ethnic reference only from a polythetic core of differences found in physical appearance, language and cultural style. There are more complex fringe cases of attributing ethnic labels that may be more interesting with regard to the ways in which ethnic deixis is construed.

Case situation 3

[Apart from the grandmother whose first language is Hai||om, the people at Mohake speak Owambo as their first language. They have large fields around their permanent homestead. They also possess some goats. They are on good terms with their Owambo neighbours at the same place. My conversation with them was carried out with the help of some of their Hai||om-speaking relatives who translated for us.]

⁵Even in cases of adoption "Kwankala" growing up in an Owambo household frequently return (voluntarily or not) to their "Kwankala" relatives or are excluded from the Owambo cycle of social reproduction as they may find no marriage partner or may be left without cattle and land.

I ask why the woman's two grown-up children do not have their own homestead and field at this place. The old woman's daughter answers: "This is so among the Owambo but the ≠Akhoe don't do it this way." (Fieldnotes F17, 10.2.91)

Case situation 4

I ask !Gamkhas to repair the dance rattle which I got because many of the bottle tops were coming off. First she says that she has other things to do and refuses. A moment later she returns and asks me for coffee. I tell her that there is none in the pot. After a period of silence she then asks me for the dance rattle so that she can repair it for me. I get the rattle and I add that now I think it is time to make some coffee. In a mixture of anger and bemusement !Gamekhas exclaims: "Toma, you are an Owambo. First you ask for work to be done. If people don't want, then they get no coffee. If they agree to do the work, then you offer them coffee. It is just like the Owambo. They ask us to work for them, to distil *lambika* for them, before we are given something." (Fieldnotes P99, 4.1.92)

Case situation 5

When Xareb tells me that he got three bottles of liquor from distilling which he gave away to his *mûhogon* (family). I remark that he would be a rich man now if he had sold the stuff like the Owambos do. He replies: "The Owambo always just take without giving anything. ≠Akhoe are not like this, they just give". Inquiring further about the difference between *ma*, *au*, and *hui* I am told: "With Owambo or white people you do not *magu* [give to each other], only with ≠Akhoe and !Xû you do. You *ma* [give] to someone who lacks a thing. You *au* [give] and *hui* [help] at the same time. The Owambo and the white people they do not help [*hui toma*] but just ||*amagu* [sell to each other]. (Fieldnotes H44, 24.4.91; L8, 25.8.91)

Case situation 6

≠Noa ||oab goes to see how some of the workers are dividing up a cow that had died shortly before. All he gets are two pieces of skin which he has been cooking for the whole morning and which he eats at midday. He complains to me that he did not get any meat from the cow saying: "We Hai ||om are stupid, we do not know how to give. It was not like this over there [*nou | khab*, he points to the north towards ≠Gîseb], there I knew the place, here I don't. I don't know what is wrong with the people here. Only the Owambo and the white people give but the Hai ||om do not." (Fieldnotes D65, 5.1.91)



Plate 3.1 Lighting a pipe with a tinder box, and sharing a smoke.



Plate 3.2 Hai||om worker at an Owambo cattlepost receives milk from an Owambo herdsman.

Case 3 shows that from the perspective of ≠Akhoe who share many cultural features with their Owambo neighbours, the social rules of allocating land and the settlement pattern are distinctive features warranting ethnic distinctions. Cases 4 and 5 again refer to different modes of transaction that are associated with ethnic identity. Note that, as in case 6, the inversion of idealized behaviour may also occur in a situation in which the person is not given what he or she expects.

As these cases show Hai||om invoke "sharing" (≠*hûigu*) "mutual giving" (*magu, augu*), "mutual help" (*huigu*), and "selling" (||*amagu*) when defining social identity and social boundaries. Sharing is contrasted with behaviour between Hai||om and "others" especially Owambo and farmers of European origin, who do not share but sell, ||*amagu*. This categorical distinction does not always hold with regard to the social behaviour of the Hai||om and their neighbours. Owambo and Europeans do give freely and there are cases of Hai||om selling to other Hai||om. Thus, as case 4 illustrates, beyond using ethnic deixis in a classificatory manner, it is also used individually, dispensing with racial or linguistic criteria. Equally, sharing with an Owambo or selling to a fellow Hai||om as a way of social reference creates or removes common ground for future interaction. By engaging in transactions, Hai||om prepare the ground on which ethnic referents and other social referents overlap. Groups are thereby linked up that are treated as discrete units from an administrative point of view. That is to say ethnic deixis is used internally and, as will be shown below, social referents such as names are used across ethnic boundaries.

In this context it should be added that, on the whole, the ≠Akhoe I stayed with were fairly reluctant to make generalizing judgements based on ethnic stereotypes. Internally, when somebody was complaining about "the Owambo", for instance, there was almost always somebody else who would object saying that they are not all like this but that those at this particular place were particularly bad. When being questioned by me on issues relating to ethnic differentiation many informants would end their statements by saying things like "we are all children of God", "we are all the same blood,

after all". Whether inspired by church teaching or not, these non-racial and anti-discriminatory attitudes seem in my experience more widespread among Hai||om than among any of their neighbours. Stereotypes do exist as ideal types, but they emerge in particular situative contexts and are not linguistically codified in proverbs, or jokes (see chapter eight for a discussion of folklore). The category "tribesman", or maybe more importantly, "non-tribesman" (*dâ!haokhoeb*), follows largely situational motives of creating common ground or of delimiting it. In this categorization the distinction between "selling" and "giving" is congruous with that of *!haokhoe* and *dâ!haokhoe* (to belong to one ethnic group or not). Furthermore the distinction between "giving" and "sharing" is congruous with that of "being of one ||*gâus*" and "not being of one ||*gâus*" as I will discuss in the following section.

Residential Units

The central social unit in Fourie's early ethnographic account on the Hai||om is the ||*gâus* which he glosses as "camp" (1966[1928]:88). Today the category of ||*gâus* is more diverse in its meaning possibly because settlement types have diversified since Fourie made his observations at the beginning of this century. Appendix 3 gives an overview of the locations visited in the course of a survey of Hai||om settlements at the beginning of 1991. Depending on the clustering of huts and the proximity of homesteads, places were described as having one, two, three or even more ||*gâute* (||*gâus* pl.). In everyday reference ||*gâus* (in the sense of "home") is used to refer to the people living in the main occupied hut (*oms*) of a camp. In larger camps the term is used to distinguish clusters of huts, often forming a circle, that belong together in the sense of a hearth group and close kin ties. In the largest camps at places such as |Gomais and Fisa the term is used to refer to those people who lived in one place before moving to the larger

settlement.⁶

However, the variance in reference appears to reflect a more fundamental variability with regard to leadership positions and sharing. Fourie (1966[1928]:87) already noted that each ||*gâus* was headed by a *gaikhoeb* and although the term is used today, and may have been used in the past, for any senior person (and for "husband") ||*gâute* are commonly enumerated by the names of their male "heads". Another term "*danakhoeb*" (lit. head man) which is sometimes used in this context is not mentioned by Fourie but underlines the fact that "chiefs", as Fourie glossed *gaikhoeb*, played a role in Hai||om society. Hai||om headmen have been reported in several early sources (cf. Cipriani 1931:578, Galton 1890:123, Hahn and Rath 1859:299, see Gordon 1992:27) but so has the largely nominal or even vacuous character of the authority they had internally (Fourie 1966[1928]:86).⁷ Unterkötter gives an account of meeting the "king" of the Hai||om but hastens to add that he was as poorly dressed and equipped in terms of possessions as all other Hai||om (Unterkötter 1957:5).

There is, however, much indication that these chiefs were either the product of the frontier situation, in which violent conflicts demanded authoritarian structures (see Gordon 1992:50), or broker-type individuals who were empowered by incoming groups. This seems to apply to the two "captains" with whom the German colonial government made "protection

⁶Both Nama and Damara today gloss ||*gâus* as "household". It denotes a unit of economic cooperation and of collective ownership of productive resources. However, it's also used to refer to the kin to whom one is related by descent (Fuller 1993:142).

⁷Fourie's general statement about "Bushmen", though probably heavily influenced by his information on Hai||om reads: "At the head of each group is a big man or chief. Though usually considered to be a chief in name only and without any authority over the members of the group, he in fact does exercise considerable influence in the life of the community because in him are vested certain functions, the performance of which are of vital importance to the welfare of his people" (1966[1928]:86). Fourie probably alludes to the lighting of the fire and the tasting of the first fruit which I discuss in chapter five and four respectively.

treaties" (Schutzverträge), namely Kruger (a "baster") of Gaub [|| Gaub] and Aribib (possibly a !Kung) of Naidaus [!Naidaos] (see Köhler 1957:54, Budack 1980:part 19, Gordon 1989:144-7, 1992:49-51, 237). Hai||om today recall powerful *danakhoeku* (*danakhoeb*⁸ pl.) in their parental and grandparental generations. In the "communal" areas these men were appointed by the nearest Owambo headman or by the king on one of his visits. They had several wives and owned guns they had received from the Owambo. Further to the south every group of "Bushmen" living on a commercial farm had a "voorman" empowered by the farmer. I was told that all these *danakhoeku* are now dead. The only person who was still regarded by some to be like the *danakhoeku* of the old days lives at |Gomais without having any power. When I asked him how he became a *danakhoeb* the following dialogue developed:

Jakob: "The army commanders who stayed here told me to look after all the people at |Gomais. It is my duty to go to the farm managers if there are people quarrelling with each other."

Jakob's brother: "You should not interfere with your neighbours when they are fighting."

Jakob (slightly angry): "*Ek es voorman van hierdie plek* (I am the foreman of this place)." (Fieldnotes B54, 6.11.90)

In this and other instances when Jakob was participating in public discussion, he switched to Afrikaans in what appears to be an attempt to assert authority by using the language of the colonial rulers who had given him his position. In none of these cases have I seen people following what he said, he was simply ignored. He is socially isolated in the sense that he is one of the few individuals who have moved to |Gomais from further south and not from the north. His hut is at some distance from the nearest

⁸The term literally means head-man and was according to Vedder used by Damara as a synonym for *gaikhoeb* (lit. big-man) but addressed as ||*naob* or *abogaib* (Vedder 1923:18), the terms for grandparent/MB and FB respectively.

neighbouring huts and is surrounded by a large fenced garden, since he is the most diligent gardener among the Hai||om of | Gomais.

Two elements are still observable today which were probably even stronger in the past and which contribute to the fact that Jakob's position still exists. Firstly, there is a very strong tendency among all visitors from outside to find a representative, an individual with whom they can negotiate. I have heard even the most outspoken anti-colonial and pro-democratic representatives of the SWAPO government who on their visit to | Gomais asked "to be taken to the traditional leader". And many of the Afrikaans- and German-speaking farmers I have spoken to made strong statements underlining the indispensability of leadership.⁹ The "development projects" for Hai||om may be diverse with regard to the organizations by which they are run (churches, government ministries, private foundations) but it is striking that in all cases the foremen installed are outsiders (Europeans, Owambo, Kavango, or Damara). Secondly, there is a willingness on the part of many Hai||om, at | Gomais and elsewhere, to accept the appointment of "leaders" from outside as long as they are not directly affected and can actually avoid direct interaction with outside authority by this means.

This strategy of accepting external power-holders or individuals who are externally empowered can also be observed in dealings with the police who are frequently called out to | Gomais to settle violent disputes. It can also be observed in the reluctance of any individual Hai||om to act as representatives at, for example, regional or national gatherings.

⁹It was explicit policy by the German colonial administration not to involve a large number of "Bushmen" but rather to use a "captain" (Budack 1980:part 21). The same principle was used in missionary work (cf. Köhler 1957:54) and in the Tswana patronage system (cf. Tagart 1931:7). Thus, not only have outsiders adopted the role of leader towards the "childlike Bushmen" but they also installed individuals as representatives of both insiders and outsiders. Some Hai||om have very well understood the importance of leaders in colonial and post-colonial politics. When discussing the land issue on one of the farms I was told that "we lost all our land because the Hai||om never had big leaders like all the other ethnic groups had" (Fieldnotes S53, 7.2.92).

People who are manoeuvred into such positions, such as the *danakhoeb* Jakob, do not necessarily have strong support within the group they are said to represent. Thus Jakob was never presented to me as a *gaikhoeb* of one of the three ||*gâte* at | Gomais, nor would he carry out any of the "traditional" functions of a *gaikhoeb*, such as tasting the first fruits and lighting the first fire as described by Fourie (see also chapters four and five).

Thus, the *danakhoeku* of the frontier condition seem to have been distinct from the *gaikhoeb* of a ||*gâus* as described by Fourie. I am not arguing that seniority and possibly polygyny were not important factors for the internal structure of a ||*gâus*. However, there is much to suggest that what formally looked like "headmanship" was, in social practice, counteracted by other features of the ||*gâus*. The features of seasonal mobility and flexibility in composition (also hinted at by Fourie (1966[1928]:88) will be discussed in detail in chapter six. The other feature which I want to substantiate with a number of case situations below is that the ||*gâus* is the major unit for obligatory sharing among all its members which makes any elevated position economically ineffective.

Case situation 7

Hoiseb has hunted a *durub* (aardvark) which is brought to the ||*gâus* by Dadab and I|naib (his in-laws) who cut it into pieces. The meat is then cooked by Dadab's wife. All men and women who stay around Dadab's hearth, including Hoiseb the hunter but also including visiting men from other parts of the camp, receive a share. For this they gather around two plates, one for the men and one for the women. People from neighbouring huts who are within sight of Dadab's fireplace but who form a separate hearth talk about the *durub* that is cooked but they do not leave their own fireplaces. (Fieldnotes SHA, 4.3.93)

Case situation 8

!Gamekhas has a pot of meat on the fire. |Hanagus comes for a visit and places herself quite pointedly next to the boiling pot. She does not move away when the pot is taken off the fire and the meat is distributed. She receives a piece, eats it and immediately leaves. (Fieldnotes U32, 23.12.92)

Case situation 9

Yesterday evening !Gamekhas was cooking maize meal that her daughter Maritas had brought from Fisa. Hagubes and ||Ahes come over and ask for the news from Fisa. When the food is ready Maritas distributes it among the members of the hearth but without giving anything to the visitors. ||Ahes looks very dissatisfied and repeatedly says things like, "There is plenty of food at Fisa but not here." "I think I will just go back to my house and stay like this [hungry]." She leaves without being given anything.

Today !Gamekhas has gathered a considerable number of |*arute* (wild potatoes) and *boron* (beetles). After returning she sends her small son with a plate of *boron* and a handful of |*aru* over to the next fire where |Hoegus has been lying ill for some weeks. (Fieldnotes SHA, 7.3.93)

Case situation 10

After we have given a full bag of tobacco to Jakob we see him again at another house where several men are sitting together. They share a pipe that goes around but then turn to us in order to ask for tobacco. When I turn to Jakob, about to point out that he just got a whole bag, he indicates to me not to say anything. He also shows an old tobacco bag which is almost empty. Later he tells me that he left his new bag of tobacco in his hut, taking only a little with him when visiting elsewhere since the others would immediately have asked for it. (Fieldnotes C36, 30.11.90)

Case situation 11

Dodob has just married and built a new hut for himself and his wife near to that of her family. Visiting his hut I notice that there is no fireplace in front of it. Dodob says that they do not have a hearth of their own but that he cooks and eats with his in-laws. While we sit and talk, Dodob's father-in-law comes over and asks him for tobacco. He is given some immediately. (Fieldnotes 38, 18.9.93)

These case situations show that the relations within the ||*gâus* are characterized by sharing, although sharing may take place across the boundaries of the ||*gâus*. Allowing for the diversity in scale that different social actors attach to the ||*gâus* it is in any case a spatial construct. This clear spatial dimension marks it off from the other categories discussed in this chapter, the *!haos*, the *mûhogon*, and the *!nares* (see below). Allowing

for changes that may have altered not only the size but also other aspects of the ||gâus, it is still centred around the fireplace (or fireplaces). In the current context, and possibly also in the past, it is not so much the "sacredness" of the fire but its function as a place where cooking, eating and sharing take place which gives it its prominence. The hearth may be associated with a senior *gaikhoeb* such as Dadab or with the female counterpart, a senior *gaikhoes* such as !Gamekhas. Even in a situation in which there is a senior couple, the woman takes an active part in the preparation and distribution of food (see case 7). There is no explicit negotiation about shares but individuals may make more or less implicit claims, usually by simply being at the place and staying until food is cooked. Similarly, there are strategies to ignore or avoid sharing-demands (cases 9 and 10). Hai||om are generally well-informed about the availability of resources, be they wild foods or those given on payday, or distributed by the church and government. They also have a good grasp of their potential access to these sources. However, any sharing "entitlements" cannot easily be abstracted from actual co-residence which is shown by the fact that couriers sent to ask for something on behalf of another person very often return empty-handed. Although Hai||om maintain that they do not have a *hxaro* system like the !Kung, they recognize that long distance exchange relations are person-bound. !Gamekhas pointed this out when I suggested she could send one of her daughters to collect "her" food: "What could she get over there?". When Hai||om talk about going to get "their beans" or "their mortar" they indicate that they are visiting a particular person with whom they are in an exchange relation (see next section below). In this context they do not rely on general sharing.

Given the social pressure to share within the ||gâus, moving into a ||gâus or out again has direct implications for sharing obligations. Since close residence prompts sharing, the uxrilocal postnuptial residence rule goes hand in hand with brideservice and a general assistance of a husband towards his in-laws, as demonstrated in case 11. Since husbands expect to move back to their paternal families after the first child can walk, the

Hai||om ||*gâus* can be regarded as a patrilineal localized group also found among Nama and Damara (Barnard 1975:12; Fuller 1993:142) or, at least, as a localized unit that fosters patrilineal links. However, in many cases a couple does not return to the husband's ||*gâus*, partly for practical reasons based on the conditions of wage labour. Furthermore, although cross-descent name groups exist (see the category of *!nares* below) men do not always marry their MBD so that the notion of "patrilineal clans" (Barnard 1975:14, my emphasis) seems to be too rigid to characterize the current condition of the complex Hai||om system already hinted at by Barnard (1975:13), particularly since there is no rule for matrilateral cross-cousin marriage.

What these case situations also show is that \neq *hûigu*, in the sense of "sharing" or "egalitarian" access to resources, is not presented as an absolute ideal that is realized to different degrees in people's behaviour. Everyday transactions are not conceived of as simply the product of an internal conflict between a "sharing ethos" and, say, a "selling ethos". Hai||om do not celebrate "sharing" in the sense of a public display of charitable behaviour or acquiring reputation by adhering to an ideal. This connotation which "sharing" has in present European culture and its function as a status marker for the giver is notably absent among Hai||om.

The charitable aspect of sharing is, however, fairly marked in the culture of their neighbours. Owambo landlords (and benevolent German farmers) often present themselves as providers for "Bushpeople", emphasizing how they share and give freely. These ideas often play a role as in the case of Owambo church workers at |Gomais who repeatedly asked me to take photos of them while they were performing charitable acts among "Bushpeople" such as distributing food or caring for old people.

In contrast, Hai||om sharing is a marker of social positions rather than status. Sharing is an important element in establishing common ground. This is literally the case since in order to be an immediate, indiscriminate and non-accounting mode of transaction it almost requires people to stay in the same place. If time-lapse is one of the distinctive features that distinguishes gift-exchange from barter (Bourdieu 1976 [1972]:219), then

lack of spatial distance is a crucial feature that distinguishes sharing from gift-exchange. To put it differently, being at the same place at the same time can bring about a condition in which sharing transactions are triggered off. "Leaving a share" for someone who is not there at the time is to mark the relation to that person in a salient way. It involves the long-term accounting of "shares" and the adherence to an explicit principle of egalitarianism. But, to echo Leach on the Kachin, although egalitarianism and sharing is part of the Hai||om model of their own society "it is not necessarily the goal towards which they strive" (Leach 1964[1954]:286).

Sharing is therefore not a response to an abstractly formulated forager ethos. However, the moral value of ≠*hûigu* relations may be highlighted and formulated as a response to the failure to share. By invoking the image of a person in need, a response and/or the action of sharing by those present is provoked, only indirectly promoting (in the sense of reproducing) an ethos of egalitarianism. Hai||om point out that their parents used to share among each other and this is - on further questioning - said to be true of virtually everybody on the surrounding farms, among the Owambo and everywhere else but the place of speaking. This is a common way of invoking sharing in an attempt to enforce it locally and to sustain particular social relationships.

The above cases illustrate that ≠*hûigu*, *magu* and ||*amagu* are not defined quantitatively by a ratio, or to use Sahlins' term, balance of goods and services being transacted. Reciprocal forms of transaction are not categorically opposed to non-reciprocal forms in Hai||om since these activities (to share, to exchange, to sell) may at any time be given the meaning of two or more persons reciprocally affecting each other by adding the regular reciprocal verb extension -*gu*. Nor are these terms defined on a continuum between emotionally strong affection and utilitarian distance. Rather, as the examples show, there are a number of ways in which individual strategies to influence the balance or flow of goods can be brought together with individual decisions on social affection and morality. The ||*gâus* as a cognitive category to be invoked, as a moral bond between

individuals, and as a factual cluster of occupied huts on the ground provides one way of doing so. Kinship and other relationship terms are even more common conventionalized tools that can be used for individual strategies of creating common ground. As the following paragraphs will show, relationship terms are also limiting in this process because of their conventional nature.

Avoidance and Joking Relations, Seniority, Gender, and Genealogical Kinship

Although Hai||om readily extend their kinship terminology in order to incorporate newcomers or any other Hai||om they encounter, it is not a matter of simple ascription but of cooperative construction. Their kinship system may be called "classificatory" but that is not to say that it operates in an automatic fashion since it usually allows more than one way of reckoning a social relation and it retains a certain flexibility throughout. This appears to be true for all systems of social relations, not only among hunter-gatherers. Strong support for this comes from studies on the appropriation of social institutions in history (Fuller 1993) and - as yet further afield - on the acquisition of culture by children (Toren 1993).¹⁰

In this paragraph I want to demonstrate that the argument for a cooperative construction of relationship terms holds true for the development of social relations in changing situational contexts and over sequences in

¹⁰Toren shows in her study of how Fijian children learn the abstract principles of social hierarchy that, far from merely reproducing the cultural categories of the adults, children have to actively construct the meanings attached to practice (Toren 1993:162). The ritual drinking of kava, loaded with notions of hierarchy and difference, is for children "merely what people do when drinking kava" (1993:147). Similarly I would not be surprised if developmental research with Hai||om children showed that obligatory sharing of mangetti, or the gift-exchange of *!no* among cross cousins, loaded with ideas of equality and common ground for adults, is for children "merely what people do when sharing mangetti and *!no*".

individual life histories. As Fuller has pointed out for the recent Damara history, individuals contract or expand their network of social relations as their economic conditions change, maintaining the "situational quality to notions of kin" (Fuller 1993:114-5).

From my Hai||om data, this can be shown with regard to the case of I|naib, a widower of advanced age, who moved to |Gomais halfway through my field research after losing his job (or giving it up, that remained unclear) on a commercial farm. Although I|naib is closely related to several people at |Gomais, he had not lived there for a long time and the cases given below give some indication of the process in which he established his relation with the |Gomais residents and vice versa. Because of his long career as a farm worker I|naib has no bow and arrows. His age and impaired eye-sight would in any case make it difficult for him to go hunting. His plans to start a garden at |Gomais did not bring any immediate returns. Despite the fact that in the foreseeable future he is unlikely to give anything in return, I|naib is supported by a large number of people at |Gomais who help him with food. I|naib is a *!gaiaob* (medicine man) but to my knowledge he never received any money in return for his services in the medicine dance. Since he does not stand out among the other men at |Gomais who perform in the medicine dance there seems to be very little, if any, carry-over from his dancing skills to other contexts (see chapter seven).

More than most other individuals, I|naib spends a lot of his time visiting camp fires all over |Gomais and he can often be seen eating at other fires. To the observer it seems as if he is foraging among his fellow people. The following cases are taken from this visiting routine in which aspects of social deixis come to the fore.

Case situation 12

I|naib in many ways lives off his relatives at |Gomais, especially his son-in-law and his brother, both being employed by FNDC, who provide him with things from the shop. For yields from hunting and gathering he turns to other relatives, especially to Dadab. Dadab is sometimes upset about the

repeated demand sharing but he does not refuse to give on the grounds that I|aib is his |uib (in-law) whom he should support, given the fact that Dadab's wife is a Horetsu by surname just as I|naib is. I|naib does not contribute anything in return. He is supported even though Dadab's extended family has very few food sources other than what they gather themselves. After some weeks I|naib started to talk about moving back to the farms south of |Gomais, complaining that the people of |Gomais did not help him. But soon afterwards he told me that he was able to stay on because Dadab said he could. In this context he called Dadab his "father" on the grounds that Dadab is married to a Horetsu just like I|naib's father was. (Fieldnotes KIN, 12.3.93)

By calculating their relationship slightly differently than Dadab, I|naib de-emphasizes the pressure that is put on Dadab by the presence of an in-law and instead substitutes a much closer kinship tie, though also one of respect. In the following case I|naib is successful in a different attempt at demand sharing, this time towards his brother ≠Harukub who has a reputation for being stingy and who has recently moved his camp away from I|naib's hut and at some distance to other huts in what seems to be a move to avoid sharing demands.

Case situation 13

At Fisa Madan has given me three large onions which he wants me to give to ≠Harukub at |Gomais, his *omeb* [his MB] with whom he has a joking relationship. Before Madan moved to Fisa he spent a lot of time with ≠Harukub and now he visits him regularly. When I later hand over the onions to ≠Harukub his brother I|naib and several other men are present. I|naib immediately demands one of the onions. ≠Harukub refuses and starts to put the onions into a bag. But before he has done so, I|naib has grabbed one of the onions and keeps it close to him. He says that he needs this onion to make *soub* [a general term for all soups and sauces that are usually eaten in combination with maize meal or millet]. ≠Harukub protests but I|naib insists that he needs this onion for cooking. He then walks off with the onion. ≠Harukub grudgingly keeps himself satisfied with the remaining two. (Fieldnotes SHA, 18.9.93)

In this case I|naib established a strong claim over the resources of his brother who is otherwise very careful not to give away any garden products for free to anybody at |Gomais. In the following instance I|naib tries a

similar strategy but is not successful.

Case situation 14

[Teseb is an ENOK worker living in close proximity to many non-workers. Therefore, demands are frequently made of him.]

In the morning Teseb bought food from the shop including coffee which he now enjoys after work. I|naib comes along and is about to take the cup of coffee that Teseb has put in front of himself when Teseb intervenes and tells him to "stop it". I|naib indicates that he only wants a sip and makes another, this time successful, attempt to get the cup. Teseb and his wife now shout at him loudly, also calling him by his kinship term *baro* [FB, in this case based on a surname link between Teseb's father and I|naib] to let go of the cup which he reluctantly does. [Two days later] Teseb finds himself in a very similar situation but this time it is Lukab, the father of Teseb's newly wed wife, who takes the cup and empties it. There is no complaint from Teseb in this case. (Fieldnotes 22, 25.2.94)

The picture these cases give is not as complete as an analysis based on a detailed discourse analysis would be (see Zeitlyn 1993). However, they do give some first indication that I|naib, when entering the scene, is not provided with a set of rules that regulate his relations to all other Hai||om at |Gomais. Rather, his specific situation of having no income at this point in time influences the way in which he construes his relations with others. Acts of sharing and other transactions are not the enactment of rules. Rather, the transactions themselves seem to be usefully treated as part of a wider system of social reference. In situations in which relationship terms are only implicitly involved, transactions are themselves tools in what I regard as the ultimate aim of social deixis: the construction of common ground.

As Barnard has pointed out in his comparison of Khoisan kinship systems, it needs to be realized that it is not necessarily the case "that the lineal/collateral and cross/parallel distinctions are somehow logically prior to the joking/avoidance dichotomy" (1992:267). On the contrary, as Barnard shows, there is much to suggest that the opposite is true with regard to most Khoisan groups. However, despite the terminology, joking and avoidance relations are not simply behavioural categories but like all relationship terms they have conceptual, normative and behavioural dimensions. Nonetheless,

in the Hai||om context, which has many similarities with that of other Khoekhoe groups such as Nama and Damara, the categories of joking (*|hogu*) and avoidance (*daogu* or *!aogu*) are not widely used nor generally accepted as all-encompassing terms. They are derived constructions from more common terms (*|ho* = friend; *dao* = to be ashamed; *!ao* = to fear). Furthermore, there is no complete agreement as to which relatives should be joking or avoidance relatives and the distinction often seems to be compounded with other basic distinctions such as that of marriageability versus non-marriageability and junior status versus seniority. One implication of this is that joking/avoidance relationships, while still being more "basic", may to a larger degree be subject to the variability of situational behaviour than relationships based on genealogy or alliance.

I collected my information on ≠Akhoe and Hai||om kinship terminology largely on the basis of the orthodox view that gives priority to genealogy-based kinship terminology. Thus the record with regard to the practice level remains incomplete. However, the data collected allows some comparison with other Khoisan systems of relationship terms. And, combined with some case material it allows for interpretations that go beyond a purely descriptive account towards a theory of the practice of establishing common ground.

To show current ≠Akhoe Hai||om kinship terminology I found it necessary to draw two tables (see figures 3.1 and 3.2). As in many other fields of the Hai||om language, forms that are recognized as being older are replaced by terms shared by Damara, Nama and a growing population of Khoekhoe-speaking farm and town dwellers who do not readily identify with a single ethnic label and are frequently of mixed ethnic origin. It should be noted, however, that Hai||om has its own kinship terminology even though increasingly terms from Damara/Nama are taken over.

Figure 3.2 presents the kinship terminology that is currently used by most Hai||om farm workers in the Tsumeb area. Its similarities to Nama and Damara kinship terminology are apparent (see Barnard 1992:187, 208, Fuller 1993:117) particularly with the integration of terms derived from Afrikaans

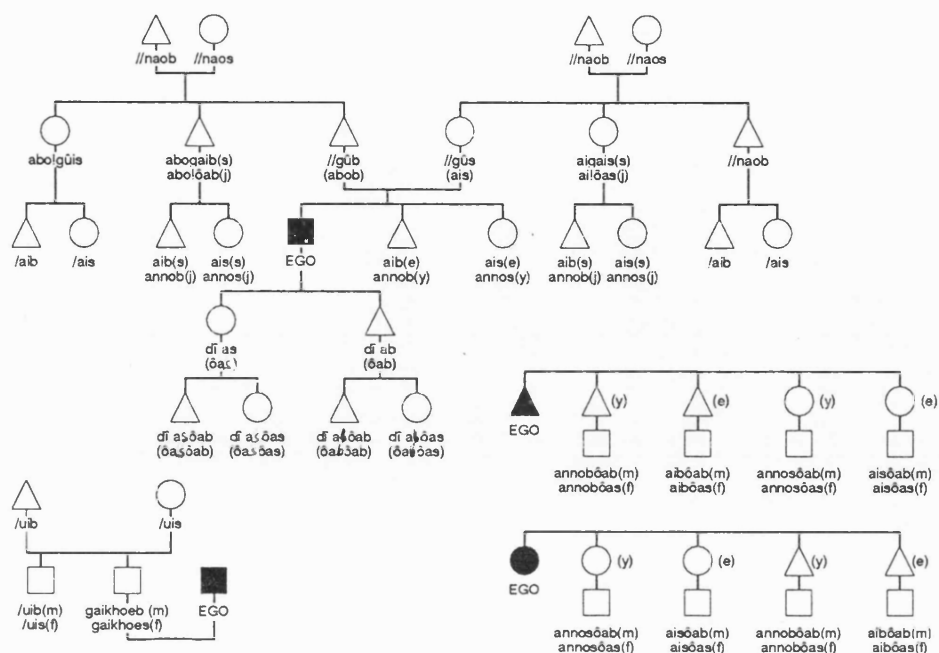


Figure 3.1 ≠Akhoe kin terminology

(see Barnard 1980a).

Figure 3.1 presents the terminology used by the most northerly ≠Akhoe groups and recognized by Hai||om further to the south (including |Gomais) as the "old" terminology. Correspondingly, I have labelled the first set "≠Akhoe kinship terminology" and the second set "Hai||om kinship terminology". In actual practice the two sets are not rigidly separated as individuals combine terms of both sets and use them synonymously. Structurally, the two sets of relationship terms are almost identical. They both share a number of basic features with the Nama and the Damara relationship terminology.¹¹

¹¹All terms given in the tables were elicited as terms of reference. In the ≠Akhoe terminology the terms for parents (*//gûs* and *//gûb*) seem to be restricted to reference while *abob* and *ais* are used in reference but more frequently in address. Similarly, the reference terms for direct children and grandchildren (*ôan*, sometimes |*gôan*, the general term for "children") are amalgamated with the possessive *di* nasalizes the following word. In address the possessive may not be used. For parallel differences between terms of address and reference among the !Kung, see Marshall (1976:241).

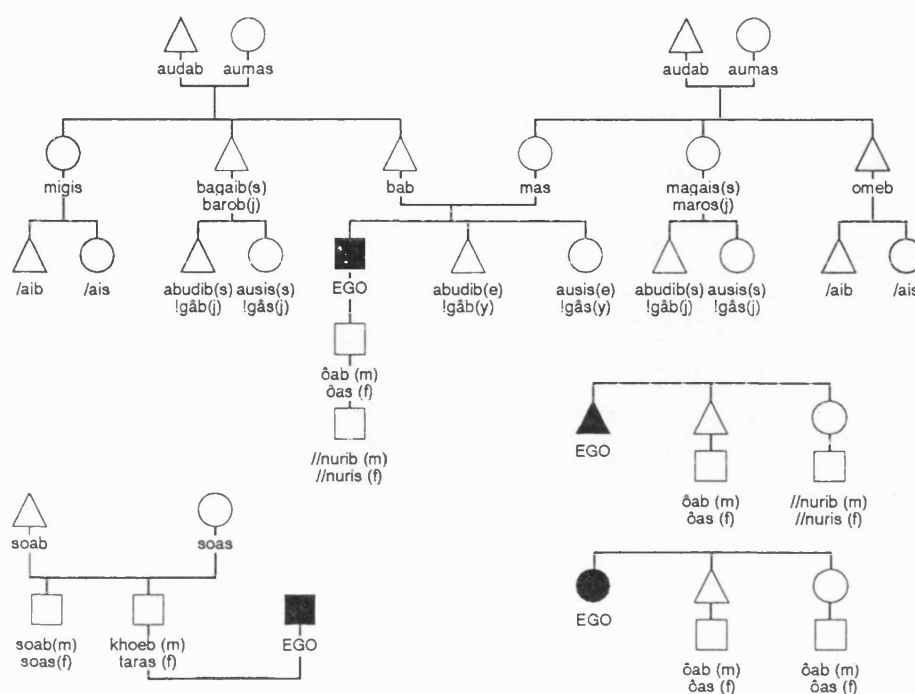


Figure 3.2 Hai||om kin terminology

- Gender is clearly marked with the regular gender endings "-s" for female (pl. "-te") and "-b" for male (pl. "-gu" or "-gwa"). As with personal names the indefinite gender marker "-i" does not occur with relationship terms but it may be applied in the plural (ending "-n") when talking about parents (*||gûxan*, *maan*, *dadaxan*) grandrelatives (*||naon*, *||nurin*) or cross-cousins (*|ain*) and siblings (*!gân*) of both sexes. Reference and address are therefore almost always explicitly gendered, but sex is above all structurally significant. Gender is relevant not primarily with regard to the individual but with regard to the "switch" it constitutes for distinguishing parallel and cross relatives, joking and avoidance relatives (see below). This corresponds to everyday social action in which a demand is never refused or granted because of someone's sex as an individual attribute (with the possible exception of the notion of *soxa* described in the following chapter). Nor is

there a great deal of joking and serious discussion about someone's sex.¹²

- Age is also regularly marked in reference and address but remains structurally insignificant since the same relationships can be traced through either junior or senior representatives of a kinship category (see Barnard 1992:289). On the surface it may therefore seem that concern about relative seniority poses a limit to the otherwise strongly "egalitarian" social organization of hunter-gatherers. However, this feature is by no means exceptional, especially not with regard to other Khoisan groups (Barnard 1992:76). And on a more fundamental level, age seem to be only of secondary importance. In the Khoekhoe languages including Hai||om younger and elder siblings as well as junior and senior parallel relatives (indicated with "y" and "e", "j" and "s" in the tables) are clearly marked either by different terms or by incorporating the particles "-ro" (small) or "gai" (big). The opposition younger/elder needs to be distinguished from that of junior/senior because, except for direct siblings, the relevant distinction is not the real age difference between the two individuals concerned but their genealogical position for instance the relative age difference on the level of the individual's parents' generation. It is striking that although the particles "gai" and more frequently "ro" may be used for cross relatives as well, this rarely happens. There is at least a partial overlap between the usage of age differentiation and the category of parallel relatives, who are at the same time avoidance relatives. This suggests that seniority goes together with respect while it does not matter in joking relations, a category that includes potential marriage partners.

-Joking partners, that is cross-cousins and their parents and grandrelatives, are not distinguished according to senior and junior status while this

¹²This does not necessarily mean that age is more important than gender but simply that the latter is seen as fundamentally fixed and unchanging and therefore less prone to manipulation. Rare cases of transsexualism were known by my informants but homosexuality was said not to occur. Both constellations were described to me as *soxa* (taboo) and were not subject to gossip or jokes.

distinction is consistently applied with regard to one's own siblings, to parallel cousins and their parents. Relative age may be seen as a differentiating and distancing device that comes into play when relevant, that is, in avoidance and respect relationships. Neither seniority nor gender in themselves provide a guideline for appropriate behaviour. Individuals may continually and severely tease a senior person if the two are in a joking relationship to each other. Similarly, gender status is highlighted in an avoidance relationship. Since "avoidance" is defined by the prohibition of marriage or sexual relations, gender difference turns non-joking, i.e. respect relations, into avoidance relations. This is particularly clear for the mother-in-law avoidance practice by young men. This is the strongest case of an avoidance relation since it prohibits direct address and other close forms of interaction. Sex difference becomes a focal subject between joking relatives in the form of lewd talk and (less public) behaviour. Thus, both parameters seem to be governed by the more fundamental, if implicit, divide between joking and avoidance.

Avoidance and joking relations are defined by the different behavioural styles that are associated with them, that is, respectful restraint in the former and permitted teasing in the latter case (see Radcliffe-Brown 1979[1940]:90). Despite this difference both are associated with gift-giving and mutual assistance though of a different kind. Compare the following five cases, the first two illustrating transactions between avoidance or respect partners (parent and child, same-sex siblings, husband and in-laws) and the other three cases describing gift exchange between joking relatives (cross-relatives, grandrelatives).

Case situation 15

Together with |Aoha| khab I am visiting Maputo. We leave most of our things in the car because it is hot and we have to walk a long distance through the bush before reaching |Haneb's hut. When we reach the place the sky is overcast and after a while |Aoha| khab is feeling cold because he left his jacket in the car. |Haneb, his brother, offers him his jacket without |Aoha| khab having asked for it. I ask whether he has been lent the jacket but he replies "I was just given it (*ma tsu*) because I needed it". |Haneb later accompanies us to the car where |Aoha| khab gives him his

(|Aoha|khab's) jacket, again without |Haneb having asked for it.
(Fieldnotes O51, 1.11.91)

Case situation 16

LB has shot a kudu with a bow and arrow and brings in the meat. A good proportion of the meat (2 thighs, 2 front legs, 1 set of ribs) goes to JB who had made the arrow with which LB had shot the kudu. JB immediately puts his meat into a bag and carries it over to the Owambo *komunisi* ["location"] where he is selling it. In contrast, LB has to obey to the demands of his kinsmen. His father-in-law and his brothers-in-law assisted him in getting the meat from the bush, cutting it up and distributing it. They, especially, seem to receive large parts of meat apparently including (but not only) ribs, legs and intestines and also the \neq gams, a *soxa* piece from the lower back. Because of this, LB's father is shouting angrily about the fact that LB's in-laws have received pieces which he and the other old men should eat. The old man is discontented with other aspects of the meat distribution and his continued protest forces LB to go to his in-laws and retrieve some of the meat for his father. (Fieldnotes A95-97, 25..90 ¹³)

Case situation 17

When the word spreads that we intend to make a journey to the north visiting Inkete and various other places, Dadab comes to us with a blanket and a cup which he wants us to take to his ||*nuris* (his ZD) who lives at Inkete. We deliver the things to her and before leaving Inkete she gives us some money for her ||*naob* (her MB) "so that he can buy himself something to drink". (Fieldnotes J63 and J68, 15.7.91)

Case situation 18

A recently born baby girl at Tsaarab wears nothing but a long necklace around her waist. It is made of glass beads and several *!gaidom*, a dried root

¹³Information gathered about the implications of arrow-sharing and about the rules for correct distribution of game is equivocal. All men carry arrows that were given to them by others. But, while it is generally maintained that in the past the provider of an arrow had particular rights in an animal shot with that arrow, a number of reasons were given which lead to other solutions. For instance the arrow-maker may be at a distant place, there might not be enough meat, or the meat is shared anyway no matter which arrow hit the animal. Similarly, there is conflicting information about the ideal distribution of game parts. This allows for some leeway when allocating game parts to specific kinsmen.

that is said to keep away disease. When the baby is crying without apparent reason her parents should bite off a bit of this root, chew it and spit it out. When I ask who gave the necklace to the child, I am told that it was given to her by her ||*naos* (grandmother). (Fieldnotes L15, 25.8.91)

Case situation 19

Bobis, who usually stays with her Owambo husband at a cattle post, spends the day at | Gomatis. She also visits !Huos, her *aib-ôas* (eBD) who is about the same age as herself and who is now married to Teseb, another worker. On her visit to her friend [| *ho*] she brings along a bowl of maize meal as a gift. When I later ask !Huos why Bobis would bring her maize meal as they had some themselves, !Huos points out to me that Bobis is her *migi* (FZ). (Fieldnotes 06, 6.9.93)

The first two cases of giving took place in a fairly sincere atmosphere. While real need, support and reciprocity characterize case 15, case 16 was accompanied by severe debate about two highly regulated areas of exchange, that is, the distribution of meat and the bride presents (*kamasi*) to in-laws. The exchange within the framework of these respect relationships matches real needs and real demands. By contrast, the other cases were initiated freely, not as a result of explicit demands or needs. These are gift exchanges that characterize joking relationships. Cases 17 and 18 illustrate another feature of the ≠Akhoe/Hai||om kinship terminology, namely that mother's brother is covered by the same term as the grandparents. This is not the case for FZ who seems nevertheless to be treated in a very similar way (case 19). Both relations need some further comment.

Especially in the case of small children, gifts are given by persons classified as grandparents who are regarded as joking partners. There is however some ambiguity here in that some, especially elderly, ≠Akhoe told me that they had a respect relation with their grandparents where they would "not dare to take anything, unless offered". This may have to do with the fact that in terms of residence children spend much of their time with grandparents who in the absence of parents take over the raising of the children. In contrast to parallel relatives who are classified as parents, cross relatives are treated as joking (| *ho*) partners although this is not clear cut. With regard to the overall terminology (both ≠Akhoe and Hai||om) FZ and

MB have a slightly different position. In the ≠Akhoe terminology MB is classified as a grandparent, i.e. removed from the collateral level, while the term for FZ (*abo!gûis*) literally means "father's sister" and is closely associated with the father. Thus, it is more of a respect term.¹⁴

Barnard has discussed this point with regard to Nama kinship terminology and its adoption of Afrikaans terms which is also reflected in the Hai||om set of terms. While "*omeb*" is derived from the lateral Dutch/Afrikaans term "oom", FB and MZ are referred to as "mothers" and "fathers" in Khoekhoe terms as much as in Afrikaans derived terms. This is consistent with the "bifurcate merging" or "Iroquois" Khoekhoe kinship system (cf. Barnard 1980a:29). FZ receives the term "*migi*" (from Dutch/Afrikaans "moeke", mother + diminutive), while FZH received the same term as MB: "*omeb*". Barnard explains this ambivalent naming of FZ in terms of the historical breakdown of the Nama patrilineal clans. In this system FZ was a "female father", that is the "structural equivalent of her brother", given her respect position as the senior female agnate in a patrilineal lineage (Barnard 1980a:31). With the disintegration of the Nama patrilineal clans FZ (FZH) and MB (MBW) became assimilated into one grandrelative category in contemporary Nama that no longer makes that distinction. Similarly Hai||om today would use the term "*omeb*" to refer to FZH (or MB) and "*migis*" to refer to MBW (or FZ), while on some occasions the terms "*migib*" for FZH and "*omes*" for MBW were also used. This suggests a tendency towards assimilation between the two subcategories although "*migi*" and "*ome*" were not freely interchangeable. Furthermore, there was a marked reluctance even among Hai||om speakers to call *migi*'s children ||*nurin* instead of |*ain*. In neither ≠Akhoe nor in Hai||om do people show the tendency reported among Nama (Barnard 1992:284) and more recently among Damara (Fuller 1993:122) to replace the term "|*ain*" with

¹⁴Heikkinen's wordlist of ≠Akhoe contains the entries "!'gûisa" and "!'gûiba" as "sister" and "brother" respectively but I could not verify their usage apart from the compound *abo!gûis* (FZ) and *abo!gûib* (FZH) (Heikkinen n.d.[c]).

"||*nurin*". Among Nama and Damara this appears to be an attempt to avoid the sexual connotation of the term in a context where cross cousins are no longer regarded as preferred marriage partners (Fuller 1993:122). Cross-cousins are, however, the preferred marriage partners among Hai||om. Moreover, the category of "marriageable partner" is synonymous with that of |*ais/b* (cross-cousin). Possibly Hai||om, unlike Nama and Damara of today, practice cross-cousin marriage because they treat it as a classificatory category. Present-day Nama and Damara seem to be less inclined to use kinship terms in a classificatory manner. The Nama and Damara |*ain* are therefore genealogically close relatives which is not necessarily so among Hai||om.

In ≠Akhoe and largely in Hai||om the term "||*nurin*" was restricted to grandchildren and to sister's children (of a male speaker).¹⁵ Even after repeated cross checking many women insisted that they would call none of their brothers' and sisters' children ||*nurin* even though the men would call their sister's son ||*nurib*.¹⁶

Thus, ≠Akhoe and Hai||om seem to have maintained some distinction between father's sister and mother's brother. Since there are no Afrikaans loan words in the ≠Akhoe set of terms (the old Hai||om set) we may hypothesize that in the Hai||om case we are not dealing with a completely separate loan process from Afrikaans into Hai||om but rather one via Nama or Damara.¹⁷ In any case the position of father's sister may either be

¹⁵Within this grandrelative level, however, "||*nurin*" was very widely used, also in encounters with Damara or Hai||om from distant places so that it echoed Fuller's Damara informant who defined ||*nurin* as "someone related to me, but not directly" (1993:121).

¹⁶According to Hoernlé (1985:53) the same was true for the Nama.

¹⁷We should also not discount out of hand the influence generated by long contact between Hai||om and matrilineal Owambo-speakers since it provides another possibility for singling out the MB (and for not assimilating MB and FZ). The Owambo term "*kuku*" (denoting a joking relation) covers grandparents as well as MB and FZH but not FZ (Tuupainen 1970:33-6). It therefore parallels or at least does not contradict the Hai||om system in this respect.

structurally "deeper" than its role in patrilineal clans or, as I prefer to see it, it is more versatile in practice. Fourie's (1966[1928]:86) mentioning that among the Hai||om at that time "the eldest sister's eldest son succeeds to the chieftainship" points to a rationale for the role of FZ derived from Khoekhoe social organization beyond that of property-owning partilineal clans. The rule observed by Fourie was confirmed by my informants who maintained that a *danakhoeb* was succeeded by his ||*nurib* (either grandson or sister's son) and not by his direct son. Furthermore, although inheritance was not regarded as of great concern or regulation, I was told that the things of a deceased man would go to his sister's son (!*gâsôab*) while the things of a deceased woman would go to her grandchildren (|*gôaôan*) As with the behaviour towards grandparents, residence may have been an important factor. If we assume that patrilocal residence is restricted by a prolonged period of brideservice the chances of co-residence between ego and a *migis* (especially father's younger sister) increases. A *migis* may in many contexts take over parental functions and be treated as a parent. Mother's brother, who is more likely to live at some distance, may for that reason be a preferred gift-exchange partner.

In sum, this discussion confirms that kinship terms do not determine social behaviour and, more generally, that language change and social change do not necessarily go hand in hand. Peculiarities of the kinship terminology structure based on the genealogical grid may have a number of rationales in actual practice, not all of which are necessarily related to the structure itself nor to its long-term historical transformations.

After what has been said with regard to the pragmatic rather than the a priori definition of kinship terms, kinship diagrams like those above are very limited in their explanatory power. They are useful for purposes of comparison and they have been compiled in a way that allows easy comparison with the kinship terminologies of other Khoisan groups which have also been collected by systematic genealogical enquiry rather than by observation of terms in use.

The categorical distinction between cross and parallel relatives as it

emerges from the genealogical tree diagram (see figures 3.1 and 3.2) gives a fairly good guideline for distinguishing joking and avoidance relations. The clearest case of a joking relationship is that between |*ain*, cross-cousins of any sex and any age. By definition this is the category to which one's spouse and all children of one's *migis* (*abo!gûis*) and *omeb* (||*naob*) belong. Frequent visiting, mutual assistance and gift-giving characterize these relationships. In practice, however, the common ground between two or more persons is more commonly constructed along sub-categories of this basic dichotomy which sometimes even cross-cut the genealogically derived distinctions. In order to express a relationship Hai||om frequently follow the same practice as other Khoe speakers (see Barnard 1978:620) by switching from egocentric nominals to reciprocal copulatives (attaching the verb extension "-gu"). That is, by switching the grammatical form from "*di | aib/s ge*" (s/he is my cross-cousin) to "*| aigu da ge*" (we are linked by being cross-cousins to each other) the kinship relation is no longer centred on the ego or the addressee but on the common ground in between. Thus brothers described their relation to me in terms of "*khoe!gâgu*" (person-brother-reciprocal). This is not restricted to direct brothers but to two men of that kinship category "who do not swear at each other [| *hoegu*]", i.e. who respect each other and whose wives are likely to be in the same kin category. Apart from "*| aigu*" and "*!gâgu*", the only other true kin term that I have found to be formed with the extension "-gu" is "||*nuri*". This not only applied to the relatively few Hai||om speakers who replaced "*| ai*" with "||*nuri*" but also to the ≠Akhoe speakers who could refer to the ||*nao*-||*nuri* (grandparent or paternal cross relative, see above) as ||*nurigu*. However, as Barnard (1978:625) has pointed out for the Nharo case, we may regard the "relationships of action and transaction" mentioned already, that is in particular ≠*hûigu*, *magu* and *augu*, as para-kin terms.

When asking for possible (synonymous) terms for |*aib/s* I was not given "||*nurin*", which was what I expected given the usage among Damara and Nama. Instead, I was given the labels "*autse*" (lit. "give to you [m.] and "*ause*" (lit. "give to you [f.]) and *augu* (giving each other) underlining the

fact that |ain are preferred gift-giving partners.¹⁸ Finally the term used for kin in general, *mûhogo* (lit. see-find-past particle[?]) is likely to have developed from a compound verb of action and interaction.

The tendency to construe kinship relations as shared by a number of people rather than egocentred or dyadic can also be observed in the strategy used to integrate all persons whom one may encounter and not only close direct relatives as classificatory genealogical relatives. When a kinship link is invoked the attempt is made to establish "bridges" or "short cuts" somewhere in the genealogical system. Commonly, distant relatives are classified together with their married partners with whom a genealogical link can more easily be established. Any individual may be identified in terms of a kinship term by relating him or her to somebody with whom a relationship has already been established. In most cases this leads to a construction whereby two basic kin terms are linked as in "*di ausi di ôasa*" (my sister's child). In the most "difficult" cases (for example on the farms where Hai||om from very distant places may be drawn together) the sex and age of the person in question are sufficient to come to a satisfactory solution in which mostly people are classified according to their relative age to the speaker.¹⁹

In most of these cases when informants are questioned whether a relation was established by "real blood relations" (born by one "mother" and one "father") the explanation given is that this is a *vana tsu* (surname only) relationship, that is, it has been calculated with the help of the surnames

¹⁸Alternatively circumscriptions such as "*migi's ôab*" (son of my FZ) were given.

¹⁹As pointed out earlier "genealogical age" overrules individual age in this operation, at least among ≠Akhoe. That is to say a young man will call an elderly man "younger brother" if the former's mother was older than the latter's mother even if the two women are not direct blood related sisters but "only" related in terms of "*vana tsu*" (surname only). It would require more research into the practice among Hai||om farm workers to confirm whether this principle still applies or whether individual age is now the decisive factor.

kai | *onte* which link a large number of Hai||om as well as individuals beyond the ethnic boundary.

Name Relationships

When the first national census in independent Namibia was carried out in October 1991, a Hai||om neighbour of ours at | Gornais was recorded as "Willem Horetzo" despite the fact that he was called "Dadab !Nabareb" by his mother when he was born, that he was later baptized as "Josef" by the Owambo pastor, that he was usually called "Jackals" by his employer, and that everyone in the ≠Akhoe community including myself called him "Teseb". Nevertheless, in terms of the census carried out, the name put on record was correct because "Willem Horetzo" was what his identity card said.²⁰ In this context the name itself is nothing but an arbitrary token that helps to account for the population in the district in numeral terms.

While the identity cards fix a first name and a surname over time and space for the purpose of non-ambivalent, lasting identification by the state authorities, it does not prevent personal names and identities continually shifting. Workers are often given much less complimentary names by their employers than "Jackals" (a name Teseb did not seem to mind). One of the German-speaking farmers in what used to be the Tsumeb farming district has the habit of adding a number to the Christian name of his (Hai||om)

²⁰At the beginning of this century the colonial administration was troubled by the fact that many "Bushmen" did not carry a pass or metal identity card for identification as it was already enforced among black workers (Gordon 1992:71, 90). Since then the administration has made a considerable effort to control "San" within the white farming districts and beyond in communal areas. ≠Akhoe Hai||om informants told me that during the war (1975-1988) army lorries took them more than 100 kilometres through the bush in order to have them photographed and issued with identity cards. Today almost all Hai||om carry an identity card (known by the Afrikaans term "kopkart"). The pre-independence IDs still in circulation not only carry a photo but also an encoded ethnic classification.

workers who have the same first name ("Wilhelm 1", "Wilhelm 2", "Wilhelm 3" etc.). The first administrator of the "Bushman" settlement at Tsumkwe reportedly avoided confusion about names that were reproduced every second generation by calling the local !Xû by the number of their registration file (Budack 1981: part 28). In these naming practices, the power-holders are clearly distinguished from those who have to accept whatever names (and types of work, payment, rules etc.) are imposed on them. The ≠Akhoe Hai||om of today voluntarily offer "appropriate" names to white or black power-holders. When Owambo-speaking nurses issue health cards they are presented with the "Owambo name" because it is assumed that they do not speak Hai||om anyway (and are unwilling to accept ≠Akhoe names).²¹

As a consequence, the name(s) adopted by a person give a good indication about that person's biography, whether that person has spent most of his life among Owambo or among white farmers, whether someone was baptized by Finnish missionaries in the north (as for "Selma", "Rauna") or by German missionaries in the south (as in the case of "Rudolf" and "Gottlieb"). In all these cases, adopting new names does not interfere with the specific Hai||om naming system but only leads to a multiplicity of first names. Unlike in !Kung or Nharo society first names do not matter structurally (see Lee 1972:356-7, Marshall 1976:238-40, Barnard 1978:616-20). First namesakes are considered |*hon*, friends and joking relations but this has only fairly limited implications given the Hai||om surname system. It is the lasting changes, generated not by numerous individual name changes but by changing patterns in surname naming practices, which I want

²¹In the recent past ≠Akhoe have been repeatedly asked to give their names and have been promised to receive something (medicine, food) in return, so that those names are offered which are expected to please whoever is in the role of the provider. Incidentally the listing of names carried out by outsiders did not facilitate research on this topic because Hai||om at times would refuse to give their names and genealogical information on the grounds that they had "given their name" before without receiving anything (most likely during the election period).

to draw attention to.

When I first saw a list of names compiled by the Owambo evangelist at | Gomas I recognized only a few individual names out of a fairly large group of people whom I already knew quite well by then. The reason was that not only were the first names exclusively Christian or Owambo names, but so were the second names in the list. This follows the current Owambo practice according to which all children are automatically given their father's first name as a surname. Hence the Owambo naming practice is superimposed here as is the naming practice of Europeans in other contexts. For those Hai||om who live under white rule the father's surname is given to all children (as is the case with Teseb himself). This is not done if a couple is not recognized as being married which is very often the case due to the lack of a Western marriage ceremony. In this case all children receive the mother's surname. What the church list does not show is that the Hai||om surname system is left intact and assumes its own role in interethnic relations.

The ≠Akhoe *kai | ons* (surname, lit. "great name") is passed on in a cross-descent manner, that is from mother to son and father to daughter. While employers and administrators are mostly concerned about first names, it is the *kai | ons* that is of much greater importance to the ≠Akhoe Hai||om themselves. This is true with regard to internal social relations as well as in dealings with outsiders since there is a much more direct link between the usage of *kai | ons* and other aspects of the kinship system than between the kinship system and first names. The Hai||om *kai | ons* is an important part of their classificatory kinship system. There is no ambivalence or confusion about someone's *kai | ons*. Although German, Afrikaner and recently also Owambo administrators have been imposing their own view of "proper name inheritance" as described above, ≠Akhoe Hai||om have no doubt about the "real" surname of the particular person. The cross-descent principle is recognized as valid and effective even in those cases where the "errors" enshrined on identity cards and police records have been adopted by individuals. Teseb, despite having adopted his father's surname, is unlikely

to marry anyone with his mother's surname since everyone knows that he truly belongs to his mother's exogamous surname group. Some informants maintained that in such a case he should not marry anyone with either his true or his adopted surname since persons with the same surname are not marriageable.

The ≠Akhoe practice of naming boys after their mothers and girls after their fathers is shared with traditionally minded Hai||om in other parts of Namibia as well as with Damara and Nama. There are small but significant differences between today's ≠Akhoe practice and the Nama and Damara pattern reported in the literature. The *kaikhoe|onte* (lit. elders' names) of the Damara and Nama were passed on in cross-descent fashion but the father's surname was added to that of the boys (also reported by Fourie 1966[1928]:95 for Hai||om) and could ultimately take over as the surname under which they were known. This was not the case for the girls/women (Vedder 1923:49, see also Schultze 1907). This corresponds to the importance of the paternal clan among the Nama which was central for the creation and maintenance of political alliances and through which the inheritance of pasture rights was organized (Hoernlé 1985[1925]:45-47, cf. Barnard 1992:188-191).

In contrast, the consistently crosslateral pattern of the ≠Akhoe *kai|onte* (surname, pl.) disperses allegiance and prevents the creation of lasting unilinear coalitions, be they along the lines of gender, generation or location. Furthermore, it allows rights in land and its resources to be spatially diversified, as will be shown in more detail below. In sum, the Hai||om *kai|ons* pattern supports flexibility in group structure and equal access to resources, both being hallmarks of hunter-gatherer societies.

The Hai||om surname pattern is closely intertwined with the classificatory kinship system and the two support each other not only in marriage arrangements but in many other ways. Figures 3.3 and 3.4 show how the *!narekhoen* (people of the same *kai|ons*) map onto the system of basic kinship categories for a male and a female ego respectively. Note that persons of the opposite sex who have either the mother's or the father's

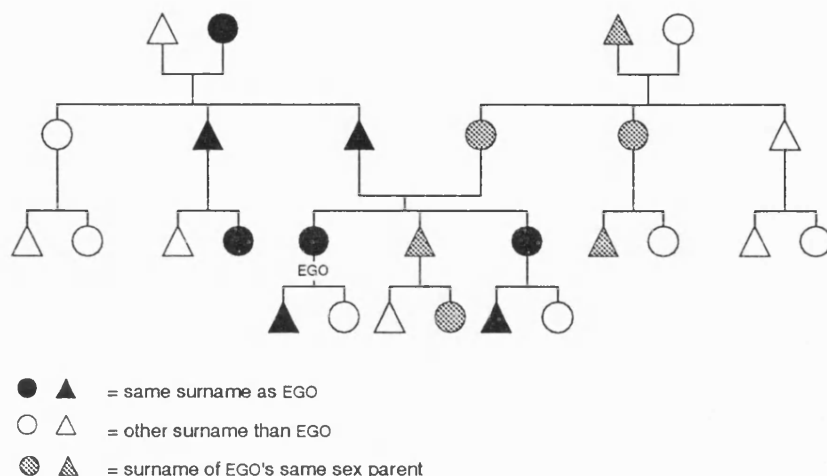


Figure 3.3 Cross-naming, ego female

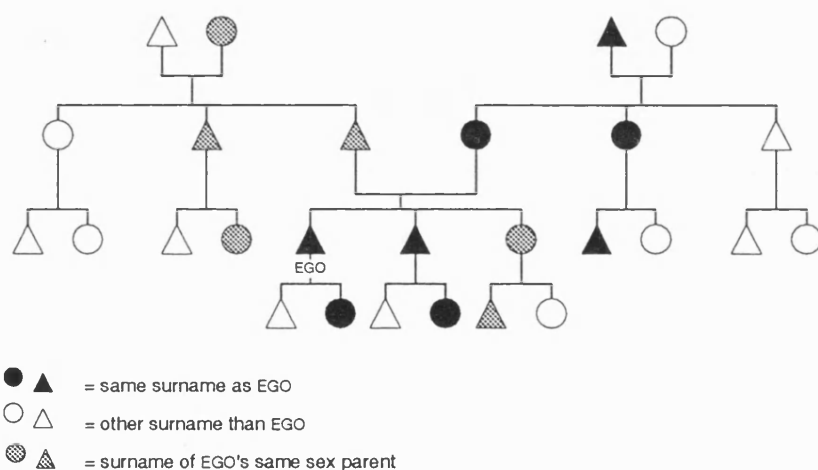


Figure 3.4 Cross naming, ego male

surname are likely to be classified as parallel cousins and are therefore not marriageable. Kinship terminology and *kai | onte* are therefore complementary with regard to marriage rules. However, more generally, it is as important to know someone's *kai | ons* as it is to know the appropriate kinship term which one should apply. *Kai | onte* can serve as a short cut in cases where a kinship relation is distant in genealogical terms or where there are several possibilities for working out kinship. If a person with the same *kai | ons* is encountered who is not closely related in genealogical terms, then he or she may be simply subsumed under the same kinship term as a closely

related person of the same surname and the same generation. Therefore, a boy a little younger than a male ego, with the same surname would be ego's *!gâb* ("younger brother"). For a woman whose *omeb* ("mother's brother") has the surname *||Khube*, all men of this name may be called *omeb* and all girls with that name *|ais* ("cross cousin"). Moreover given the small overall *≠Akhoe* population, there is a realistic chance that all people who are encountered with ego's surname (ego's *!narekhoen*) are indeed closely related kinsmen anyway. But the implications reach further than that. Any person bearing the same surname as one's marriage partner may be seen as belonging to the *|uin* ("in-laws"). Short cuts also exist within the system of basic kinship terms. Someone who has married ego's younger sister *!gâs* may be called *!gâb* ("younger brother") by ego explained as *"di !gâs u-hâ"* ("he has my sister"). These "short cuts" or "bridges" that can be established at all stages when considering a kinship relation were usually distinguished from close genealogical relations for me as *vana tsu* ("surname only", "van" being Afrikaans for "surname"). When comparing *kai | ons* relations with other kinship relations there are three main features, to be discussed in detail below, that mark the *kai | ons* as particularly versatile in social interaction:

- Its inherent link to basic rights, including rights to land, residence and the use of resources.
- Its power to divide the Hai||om ethnic group as well as all local groups into named social networks with a distinct identity.
- Its extension beyond ethnic boundaries and its potential for fostering interethnic relations.

With regard to the categories of social relationships discussed so far the particular relevance of the surname relations seems to lie in the fact that it provides a tool to combine properties of the spatial unit of *||gâus* with properties of the essentially non-spatial kin categories constituting the *mûhogon* because of its close association with the sharing of land and its resources. In contrast to the Damara context which Fuller analyzed in terms of a "vertical" *||gâus* and a "lateral" group of *|nîkhoen* [*mûhogon*], as the two units from which individuals draw during their life (Fuller 1993:144),

the Hai||om context suggests a move away from the genealogical grid as a baseline. I propose to think of these units as essentially spatial (*||gâus*) and essentially non-spatial (*mûhogan*) with a third element that has implications with regard to the patterning of space but is not a local aggregation itself and which therefore may be called transpatial: the *!narekhoen* (i.e. people who share the same surname).

Apart from a general fondness expressed in statements such as "*!narekhoen* should not fight with each other", "they should share their food" and "they should exchange presents" a more specific solidarity is also invoked. Most prominent are definitions according to which *!narekhoen* "drink the same water" and that wherever you find a *!narekhoei* you have a share in that land and its resources, since it is not foreign to you.²²

!Narekhoen as a group do not assemble to form an action group, nor is it conceivable that a local group could be formed of people who all have the same *kai|ons*. But surnames are not evenly distributed as table 3.1 indicates. In the |Gomais and †Giseb areas 6 names (of the 31 Hai||om names recorded) constitute more than half of the population. Many of the names that only occur once are that of individuals who are said to have come from other areas (see bottom of table 3.1). When I suggested to my informants that those who share a *kai|ons* possibly came from one place originally, it was never accepted. There is, however, a sense in which the notion of *!narekhoen* is linked to land and to group solidarity. In Nama "*!nare*" means "to give a gift" while "*!nare-!nare*" is glossed as "to enumerate, specify".²³ Bleek's "Bushman Dictionary" (1956) verifies

²²One informant maintained that this would also be the case if he was to come to my country one day and found a *!narekhoeb* there.

²³The Krönlein/Rust Nama dictionary (Rust 1969) lists "*!nare*" as a root meaning "gift" and composites such as "*!narexa* [khoei]" (someone who likes to give) or "*!naresa* [xui-i]" (a thing that can be given away). In present day Damara usage the word is only used in the sense of "to be granted" especially by God (E. Eiseb pers. comm.). Although Nama and Hai||om are variants of the same language the word is not common in this meaning in †Akhoe. In contemporary †Akhoe the common words for

"!narre" as the word for "ancestor, relative" among Hai||om of the Etosha region. Etymologically two glosses of *!narekhoen* may be possible (1) those who give (2) a special kind of people. In any case there is no doubt that in the ≠Akhoe representation the notion of "*!narekhoen*" (or being of one *!nares*) is closely linked to sharing, helping each other, and belonging to each other. "*!Nares*" is at the same time a word used to denote someone's land although the most commonly used term for land in Hai||om (just as in Nama or Damara) is "*!hus*" which also denotes "earth", "ground", "national territory" and "land" in the widest sense. In contrast "*!nares*", is more restricted in the sense that it denotes "native land" or "ancestral land" but also lived-in land or land lived-off, and, commonly as a fixed term, the land of the Ondonga Owambo, the *!nares*. Although the Ondonga *!nares* may just be a homonym for the *!nares* of every Hai||om, the fact that the notion of *!nares* is also linked to gardens and even the land of agropastoralists should make us cautious not to jump to conclusions and accept it as a synonym for the "sharing environment" (see Bird-David 1990). The prominent feature seems to be the sharing among people and not so much the land "sharing itself" with its inhabitants.

It seems that, conceptually, the relation between *!hus* (land divided) and *!nares* (land shared) is structurally similar to that between *oms* (house, as a building) and ||*gâus* (house, as a hearth group). Not all members of a ||*gâus* live in one *oms* but in a number of huts with varying degrees of closeness and varying periods of absence. Similarly, all *!narekhoen* do not stay in one *!hus*: they cannot, given the combination of cross-naming and exogamy. A ||*gâus* is relatively independent of the actual position of the

"sharing" or "giving" are ≠*hûigu*, *magu*, *augu* and |*goragu* (distribute amongst each other) but *!naregu* (being in a *!nare* relation to one another) is sometimes acceptable as a synonym because giving and sharing is what *!narekhoen* are by definition supposed to do. Constructions such as "*!narehuikhoeb*" (*!nare*-help-man) also occur. Given that the reduplication expresses the causative in Khoekhoe languages it is tempting to speculate that the two Nama terms (if they are of the same root) may be related in the sense that "to pinpoint (specify)" or "to count on" someone is to make him share/give.

omte (*oms* pl.) a person may construct, but as a "lived-in" version of an *oms* it also rests on the relative (frequent, prolonged) co-residence of its members. Sharing is carried out among those co-resident at a hearth. A *!nares* of a person may not be limited to one *!hus* (that is, one stretch of land) but as a "link-up" version of a *!hus* it requires some (institutionalized, repeated) co-habitation to have taken place between members of different surname groups because legitimate claims to land and its resources go along the lines of marriage relations. Despite the lack of permanent co-residence, the *!nares* identity has at its core the notion that people who come from the same land share with each other and assist each other. || *Gâus* and *!nares* are therefore complementary in that the flexibility of the former effectively redraws the boundaries while the latter determines the permeability of these boundaries. At least in current presentation, ≠Akhoe maintain that the boundaries of the land were reasonably permeable. Oral history asserts that visitors, including members of other ethnic groups, were free to use the resources of the land if they wished to (and particularly when drought forced them to). And then, as mentioned in the beginning, wherever you find a *!narekhoei*, you can consider that land as yours to some degree.

Between "*!narekhoen*" (people), "*!nare*" (sharing), and "*!nares*" (land and name shared) there is not only considerable overlap in meaning, but these notions can be regarded as being part of one "*!nare*" complex, that is, they create one complex semantic domain. In practice, to invoke one member of this domain is to draw on the related notions at the same time. This can account for the fact that *kai | ons* relationships are more versatile and more commonly invoked as a common ground than kinship terms of address. It may also account for the larger indeterminateness of relying on the *kai | onte* since they only link up to "land" and "sharing" by the way of an interactional implication.

In everyday life membership of a surname group is as omnipresent as kinship terminology. When Hai || om talk about an individual in a distant place and when they want to point out their relation with that individual they may refer to *di !narekhoeb/s* (the man/woman belonging to my surname

group) rather than using the individual kinship term involved (or a first name for that matter). People who meet each other for the first time can be observed elaborating on their *kai | onte* as part of the introduction and then proceeding to establish an adequate kinship term to be used. This was also the case when an elderly man was introduced to some adolescents who had never visited the place where the encounter took place and whom the man had never met before. The first thing he asked for were their *kai | onte*.

The following cases underline the importance of surname relationships in establishing common ground in a variety of contexts, not only when encountering someone for the first time.

Case situation 20

An old man with the surname Goboseb rests under a tree in a small garden when a small boy rushes noisily through the patch. The old man is annoyed and demands to know who it was. A bystander responds "*Sa !narekhoeb ge!*" ["It is someone with your surname"] which appeases the old man. (Fieldnotes NAR, 3.3.93)

Case situation 21

An adolescent boy joins a group of people seated round a camp fire in the evening and complains that he was almost beaten up by another young man in the camp who had drunk some alcohol. He explains that he himself did not want to fight which is why he had told him "*Tita ge a || Gam || gaeb, sats ge a || Gam || gaeb tsina*" ["I am a || Gam || gaeb and you are also a || Gam || gaeb"]. However, the other one did not listen and still attacked him. This raises some comments among the indignant listeners who lament how alcohol causes people to go out of their minds. (Fieldnotes R80,25.1.92)

Case situation 21

A number of people rest at a camp fire at midday and discuss plans for future visits with the anthropologist's car. An elderly woman recalls the names of some people resident at the places to be visited. To one of the young men present she points out that there is only one *!narekhoes* of his at that particular place and that this is not going to be a particularly good place for him to stay. (Fieldnotes NAR, 3.3.93)

Case situation 22

I talk to some men about my impending departure to a place about 80 kilometres north of | Gormais. A man who has lost his job and is thinking of moving wants to get a lift. When I point out to him that he has never been to any of the places we are going to visit and that the people up there are not his *mûhogon* [close family] he replies: "The mother of Abakub and Eliab [two men staying at the places to be visited] and my own mother were born of the same parents and they are therefore all *!narekhoen*". (Fieldnotes NAR, 12.3.93)

The subject matter involved in these situational contexts is variable. In the cases given it ranges from appeasement, to mediation in an open conflict, decision-making and preparations for visiting or for moving camp. The *kai | ons* may also be invoked like kinship terms of address in order to ask for things from other people (and to explain sharing and gift-giving to the anthropologist) or to express fondness towards a person and express grief at a person's death. Despite this range of subject-matter, the way in which the *kai | ons* is invoked is very similar in all instances. It is misleading to think of it in terms of an abstract set of rules of behaviour. As the examples show, formally sharing a surname does not by itself lead to showing consideration for someone or to refraining from fighting. It does not necessarily determine where people can visit or settle, nor can it be used to predict where someone might travel. All these functions are only effective once the *kai | ons* relationship has been actively highlighted in a cooperative task that involves a number of considerations. When a surname is invoked, a desired outcome cannot be predicted with certainty but can only be realized together with the interlocutors. The *!nares*, the group of people that shares a *kai | ons*, can be invoked as common ground in a variety of situations. At the same time sharing this common ground presupposes that the common identity is accepted by the interacting persons. Despite the fact that *!narekhoen* do not form a corporate action group or a residential unit, it can take over features that are associated with social entities of this kind, such as sharing, exchange, mutual support and cooperation, when it is invoked and confirmed by the interacting individuals in this particular social constellation.

Relationship Categories and Interethnic Contact

Interethnic contact between Hai||om and other ethnic groups is real. In my records of "mixed marriages" there are 9 marriages with Owambo, 3 with Damara, 16 with !Xû in a sample of 134 couples.²⁴ Hence, it was to be expected that relationship categories would have to accommodate these links. I soon realized that more was involved than a mere extension of internal rules beyond the ethnic boundary when I enquired about the *kai|ons* identity of a girl with an Owambo father. The baby girl had three first names (one Hai||om, one Christian, and one Owambo). I was told that her surname, which according to Hai||om practice should be that of her father, was "Horetsu", a common Hai||om name but neither that of the mother nor of any close male relative of the mother. When I enquired further I was told that her name was Horetsu because her Owambo father is an *omukuamalanga*, that is a member of the "elephant" *ezimo* or *epata* (see below). While the accumulation of first names was an extension of relations by addition, something more complex was involved with regard to her surname.

Before discussing the ways in which *kai|ons* relationships are used interethnically by the ≠Akhoe, some aspects of the social organization of the Kwanyama and Ndonga, both neighbouring Owambo agropastoralists, should

²⁴In none of these cases are husband and wife married by civil record. In at least 5 cases the Owambo men were married to an Owambo woman and kept a "Kwankala" woman on the side (sometimes without knowledge or consent of the Owambo woman). As long as these partnerships were not only brief sexual affairs I treated them as "marriages" given that they involved some integration of the Owambo man into the Hai||om in-law family and given that Hai||om marriages may also be polygamous and often involve frequent splitting of couples. The figures given do not include Hai||om living on commercial farms. While the !Xû partner may be male (7 cases) or female (9 cases), all Owambo partners were male. Shikesho (n.d.:appendix 4) found a rare case of an Owambo woman being married to a Hai||om man and documents the resistance to such a marriage from the Owambo side (in this case the couple eloped).

be pointed out. According to the early ethnography Owambo clans ("*epata*" in Kwanyama and "*ezimo*" in Ndonga) were matrilineal in terms of inheritance, responsibility towards children, and solidarity in cases of material loss (Tuupainen 1970:31). Due to the exogamous character of the *epata* and its combination with patrilocality, members of an *epata* are dispersed over a larger area despite the unilinear descent system.

There are, therefore, similarities between the Hai||om and the Owambo pattern of social organization because in the Owambo case, spatially dispersed clans go together with a notion of mutual assistance and access to resources (above all cattle). Important differences are the fact that Owambo clans are hierarchically ranked and that chieftainship is passed on by inheritance within particular clans (Hahn 1966[1928]:8, Tuupainen 1970:31-3). This has led to the common practice of adopting the man's *epata* identity for a couple's children if his *epata* is higher than that of his wife (Tuupainen 1970:31). As for surnames (here only in the sense of second names), the father's name was used to name all his children which in recent times has led to fixed surnames derived from a forefather and handed down through the men of a family. This is paired with a general strengthening of the paternal line, which has been attributed to the intense Christianization of the Owambo during this century (Aarni 1982) but also to industrialization and urbanization (Tuupainen 1970:33). According to Owambo informants who live in the same part of Namibia as the ≠Akhoe Hai||om, the acquisition of an *epata* identity now mostly follows the patriline. In contrast to the Hai||om pattern inheritance and allegiance follow one line of descent which form economically and politically strong lineages. Today, clan exogamy is no longer rigorously adhered to and the knowledge and relevance of clan membership has been declining sharply. Despite a general decline in social relevance, two aspects of *epata* identity are still strong. These aspects are firstly, the hierarchical position of an *epata* and secondly, the accumulation of economic assets in the hands of the matriline. With regard to the second aspect, many Owambo couples with wage income use non-disclosed life insurance to ensure that the widowed partner or their

children are not deprived of their inheritance by the kin group. It is noteworthy that these aspects are exactly those that are not part of a Hai||om *kai|ons* relationship. Therefore, the social implications of the Hai||om and the Owambo patterns persist.

From a historical perspective it also becomes clear that within Owambo groups the number and naming of clans is not static (see Tuupainen 1970:140-2 for an overview of the literature). Owambo clans amalgamated and split over time with local variation adding to the diversity (see Williams 1992). Tuupainen lists 13 clans for the Ndonga (1970:26) while Tirronen (1986) lists 19 clan names in his Ndonga dictionary. Louw lists 31 clan names for the Ngandjera which are partly interchangeable so that the total number of clan groups is only 14 (Louw 1967:38). Furthermore, some names recur across group boundaries, while others seem to be limited to one ethnic group or sub-group. Some of the clans originally appear to have been occupied by members of a particular occupations such as potters, blacksmiths, or woodcarvers (Loeb 1962:100-1). Handicrafts, especially the blacksmith's work, were reportedly occupations of low esteem among the Ndonga (but not among the Kwanyama), so that the creation of professional clans may have been a strategy to incorporate marginal groups into the wider Owambo society (see Heintze 1972:53). Reports about endogamous "Kwankala" (Bushmen) clans of low reputation have been interpreted as a tool for facilitating the incorporation of local "San" populations (Heintze 1972:53). But even if this has occurred in the past there is much to suggest that this is not a general feature of Owambo - "San" relations. The *kwankala* clan, glossed by Williams as the clan of the "dwarf mongoose", not only involved "San" or other poor people (Williams 1992:85) and "San" were members of other clans (Lebzelter 1934:12, Tuupainen 1970:27). Furthermore, the general fluidity of the clan structure as described by Tuupainen seems to have allowed a number of incorporation practices. While Lebzelter (1934:195) mentions a clan comprising all foreigners, Loeb (1962:124-5) maintains that "slaves" who were recruited only among foreigners, especially prisoners of war, belonged to the clan of

their captors.

In contrast to Owambo strategies of incorporation, Hai||om interethnic relations are characterized by the extension of their classificatory kinship terminology and the *kai|onte*. Although in practice not all "foreigners" are referred to by (or addressed with) kinship terms, it is accepted that in principle they may be applied to include distant relatives, any visiting Hai||om, the anthropologist, or indeed any other person if one wants to establish contact on that level. In practice, however, the circle of people to whom classificatory kinship terminology is extended is drawn rather narrowly, usually excluding people from another *!hus* (region, land), especially those who belong to another ethnic group. When eliciting kinship terms and including married-in Owambo I was usually not given an answer since they are *dâ!haokhoen* (not "same nation people", other tribesmen), although it is quite acceptable for the parents and siblings of the Hai||om wife married to an Owambo to call the husband *|uib* (in-law). There is much less reluctance to incorporate other Khoisan-speaking peoples such as Damara and !Xû as classificatory kin but this depends very much on the individual background of an informant (i.e. the extent of his or her contact with members of these groups).

The individual sphere of interaction also determines to what extent *kai|onte* are used in interethnic relations (this occurs to a lesser degree among Hai||om of the commercial farms but is more widespread among ≠Akhoe in the north). However, the notion that the *kai|onte* are truly universal and can be found all over the world is more generally accepted. According to the prevalent ≠Akhoe Hai||om view, all people including Europeans, !Xû or Owambo have a Hai||om surname, but they usually do not know about it. More precisely, what they do not know is how their surname would translate into a Hai||om *kai|ons*. In principle it was known to all of my informants that any Hai||om surname translates into a *|naben kai|ons* (Owambo surname), that is, an Owambo clan name. It is simply a matter of whether one is interested in finding out. Hai||om who spend most of their time on commercial farms in the south say that they do not know

their Owambo surnames but they are prepared to recommend someone who has stayed with Owambo for some time who would know. When asked about the origin of their knowledge those people said that in the past they learned them from other Hai||om who were living close to the Owambo. Although it is generally accepted that there is one correct correspondence of names the actual translations given show some degree of variance. Table 3.1 lists the Hai||om surnames together with the corresponding Owambo clan name that was given in the majority of cases, with alternative translations added as second and third entries. The same degree of flexibility seems to apply to listings of Owambo *epata* (see above). The translations into English and the ranking given in the table were compiled from information collected locally among Kwanyama-speaking people living in Hai||om country.

This collection of *kai | onte* is based on a survey of 20 places in the area formerly called eastern Owamboland (east of 17 degrees eastern longitude) and among the Hai||om population of | Gomais and Fisa. As the table shows there is not a one to one correspondence between Hai||om surnames and Owambo clan names. In several cases, especially for *kai | onte* that are more common in the south, people were not sure about the corresponding Owambo name. Note that many but not all of Owambo names are of low status clans which have been reported to have "Kwankala" members (cf. Tuupainen [1970:27] for *ekuanangome*, Lebzelter [1934:12] for *ekuanambwa*). There is not a single incident of membership claimed in the *ekuankala epata*. Rather, the distribution of names is very much what one would expect also to be true for the Owambo population itself.

Table 3.1 Hai||om surnames and Owambo clan names
 (next page) Only encountered once: ||Naube ("ekuandimbe"), ||Gaibe ("ekuanime"), Daua (| Khomakhoe), Anabe (| Khomakhoe), !Hora (Xomkhoe), Abase (Sâukhoe), Aue (Damara)
 The table is based on the names of 291 individuals.

<i>kai ons</i>	<i>epata</i>	
‡Gaose (14)	a) ekuanime b) ekuandimbe	a) "lion" (high, kings) b) "grain" (high)
‡Nâse (7)	ekuanime	"lion" (high, "kings")
!Nani (11)	ekuandimbe	"grain"
Gonsôa (13)		
Khube (18)	a) ekuanaira b) ekualuwala c) ekuanangombe	a) "grain" b) "zebra" (middle) c) "cattle" (middle/high)
Horetsu (17)	ekuamalanga	"elephant" (high, "kings")
Haue (3)		
Kabise (6)		
Tsuse (2)	a) ekuanamba b) ekuanime	a) "dog" (low) b) "lion" (high)
Gobose (25)	ekuanambwa	"dog" (low)
‡Aroa (8)		
!Nabari (15)	a) ekuanafeta b) ekuanangombe c) ekuanabuba	a) "crocodile" (middle) b) "cattle" (middle/high) c) "grain" (high)
!Haribe (7)	ekwanyoka	"snake" (low, "cheeky")
‡Naibe (6)	a) ekuanangombe b) ekuandimbe	a) "cattle" (middle/high)
Gam gae (64)	ekuahepo	"locust" (low, "poor")
‡Nana (22)	ekualuwala	"zebra" (middle)
Khamamu (11)	a) ekuanafeta b) ekuanegamba	a) "crocodile" (middle) b) "wolf" (low)
‡Naibe (5)	ekuanangombe	cattle (middle/high)
Som (2)		
Garu (2)		
Gûisôa (4)		
Gabase (5)		
O (7), Tsam (6)		
Khâusôa (4)		

Note also that some but not all Hai || om *kai | onte* are associated with animals but that they do not correspond with Owambo *epata* animals. For instance, the etymology of "Gobose" refers to a bird of that name while the corresponding *epata* refers to "dog". "Nabari", an onion-like plant of the bush, also does not correspond to the meaning of associated *epata* names. Although not all etymological meanings of the *epata* are known to Hai || om no attempt is made to harmonize the meaning with regard to the animals involved. There is no indication that Hai || om have any special relation to the animal or plant species involved, but this is also true for most Owambo today. While informants accepted that several Hai || om names do translate into one and the same Owambo clan name, the fact that in my collection of data I was given different Owambo clan names to match one Hai || om name was regarded as a mistake, since there could only be one correct match. It was assumed that informants' knowledge was simply incomplete. The translatability as such is not questioned - it is even accepted as a tool to work out a corresponding kinship term. Hence, two middle-aged Hai || om women who identified their surname relationship with the Owambo owner of a homestead called him their "father". He preferred to call them his "sisters", given that they are the same age as he is and that in the Owambo case children of both sexes inherit the same clan membership. For the ≠Akhoe women to call the Owambo "brother" would not have made sense since, in that case, he would not share their *kai | ons*. At the same time, the kinship terms selected on the basis of the *kai | ons-epata* relationship also reflect the factual relation of dependency and authority that are manifest between the two Hai || om workers and the Owambo owner of the homestead. This raises the question as to the kind of situational contexts in which *kai | ons-epata* correspondences may be sought.

The conversion table given above is misleading since this is not the way in which the conversion option presents itself to the parties involved. Knowledge about each other's surnames is locally shared (or, in other cases, not shared). There is no rule that makes surname relationship a necessary

prerequisite of interethnic working relations. There are cases where the Owambo may simply be called "friend" (*| ho*) when the relation is regarded as fair and advantageous by the ≠Akhoe. *Kai | ons-epata* correspondence is given by ≠Akhoe and Owambo as a rationalization for their residing in one place and their economic cooperation, as the cases presented below demonstrate. The conversion between *kai | ons* and *epata* is part of an overall cooperative effort. As such, it occurs at specific stages in the interactive process which makes it heterogeneous with regard to underlying motivation and indeterminate with regard to its outcome. Discussing a social relationship with an Owambo which is constructed with the help of this conversion is also a reflection on the present state of interaction in this process. Invoking this relationship is not idle play but the strategic construction and maintenance of specific arrangements or the demand for their implementation. The adequate presentation of interethnic usages of the "*kai | ons*" is therefore not a table but a number of cases in which the situational framework is retained.

Case situation 23

At Ekoka a middle-aged widow moves to an Owambo homestead where she works for several weeks mostly collecting grass for the construction of huts. The Owambo homestead is only about three kilometres away from the ≠Akhoe camp where she owns her own hut. However, her children have moved to other places and she has vague plans to move away from this local group herself. (A year later she has moved to a completely different place). At this point in time she does not have any *!narekhoen* in the ≠Akhoe camp but the owner of the Owambo homestead she is working at is an *omukuahepo* and she herself is a *||Gam||gaes*, which are corresponding names. When we go to see her at the Owambo homestead only the owner's wife is present. She maintains that, because of the surname correspondence, they are giving hospitality to the ≠Akhoe woman, that is they give her work to do, food, a hut to stay in and a blanket. (Fieldnotes M67 8.10.91)

Case situation 24

At Inkete a local ≠Akhoe man regularly works in the field of one of the two local Owambo. Although there are difficulties between the two men about the terms of exchange the ≠Akhoe points out that they get along with each

other because they are *!narekhoen*. His wife, on the other hand, complains that the Owambo does not give her any tobacco. She says: "He is my husband's *!narekhoeb* but still he does not give me any tobacco but asks me for money." (Fieldnotes T25, 15.2.92)

Case situation 25

At Sanab the local \neq Akhoe had a number of bad experiences with Owambo at the places where they had stayed in the recent past. They were forced to move from Sanika because they were not allowed to drink the water when it was getting scarce and the Owambo (who dug the waterhole) claimed that there was not enough water for his livestock to drink. They moved from \neq Gfseb after being paid only little millet for their work in the fields. At present they mostly live on gathering mangetti and selling handicrafts (knives and arrowheads) but they are keen to get agricultural products, as well, given that they do not have any livestock and that their garden is not producing yet. In this situation they discuss their plans for the following days. The oldest man suggests going to an Owambo *!narekhoeb* nearby and asking for food. It turns out that it is not his but his wife's *!narekhoeb* but the old man makes a strong point that there is a good chance of receiving some food for free at this homestead. (Fieldnotes NAR, 25.3.93)

Case situation 26

At Natie the local \neq Akhoe and the local Owambo have an ostensibly good relationship which involves frequent mutual visits, exchange and assistance. \neq Akhoe children are resident at the Owambo's family near the tribal centre. The \neq Akhoe man hunts with the Owambo's gun and munition (sharing the yield). He has been given a few head of livestock for his work on the Owambo field. The animals are then herded communally (by young boys of both families). A rationalization given for the good relationship both families have had over the years is that the first wife of the Owambo is a *!narekhoes* to the \neq Akhoe man. (Fieldnotes G63, 5.4.91)

The contextualization of the *epata-kai | ons* conversions shows the fleeting character of the relations created. They can remain dormant for some time and the effort needed to reinvoké them is variable. The degree to which individual *epata - kai | ons* correspondences can be extended to include close relatives or indeed a whole local group is also variable. Given that there are always several *kai | onte* in one local camp, as there are several *epata* in an Owambo homestead, there is a good possibility that some correspondence will be found, from which others may then benefit. By the

same token the requests and assets that an individual ≠Akhoe or Owambo brings into his or her relationship differs from person to person as well as across periods in one's life and even in the seasonal cycle. The time factor, group extension, and the intensity of interaction are subject to negotiation and, at times, conflict. Past experiences with (other) Owambo as well as the availability of economic and social alternatives shape the overall process of which the case situations given are, again, only episodes.

A pattern emerges from the diversity of cases. The *kai | ons-epata* correspondence is invoked to a high degree by groups and individuals who live in the sparsely populated areas and who are in constant contact with a limited number of Owambo. The name conversion is utilized to a much lesser degree among Hai || om living on commercial farms or service centres who only have contact with individual Owambo (mostly migrant labourers) and among Hai || om who have given up their own camps and are permanently and fully integrated into Owambo homesteads. The latter group is called *Sâukhoe* by fellow Hai || om (and sometimes also by themselves), a slightly derogatory and mocking term (literally meaning "millet people") which denotes the notion of having given up Hai || om lifestyle, language, and social organization. In these cases, Hai || om care less about the option to convert surnames and are in some cases unable to do so when asked because they are not sure about their *kai | ons* or their Owambo *epata* or both. Correspondingly, the Owambo they live and work with seem to have less interest in endowing their Hai || om serfs with an *epata* identity. At the Ndonga tribal centre the existence of a "Kwankala" equivalent to *epata* is questioned. If intermarriage or adoption occurs, it is a complete integration of the individual into Owambo practices with the higher status and thereby also the *epata* of the Owambo man being adopted for all children.

At the commercial farms, being at the other end of the continuum, isolated Owambo individuals are often integrated into Hai || om society or, at least, the children of mixed sexual relations are brought up as Hai || om. Usually these relations are not regarded as marriages and, as with all "unofficial" marriages among Hai || om farm workers, all children receive the

name of the mother. If a migrant worker takes a child of mixed origin to his family at his home place (which is an issue of frequent conflict since Hai||om women are afraid of losing their children) then the child is brought up as Owambo. The *kai|ons-epata* translation contrasts with both these extremes which suspend one system in favour of another. The translation practice retains the formal features of *!nares* relations within Hai||om social organization, above all crosslinearity and exogamy. Also, as the cases presented show, the constituent aspects of the "*!nare*" complex, that is, mutual assistance, access to resources and hospitality, are invoked in the surname conversion.

Finally, the surname conversion facilitates intermarriage, or in most cases, the integration of children with an Owambo father and a Hai||om mother. (All mixed couples are of this constellation.) When inquiring about the *kai|ons* of these children I first encountered the notion of translatability. A female child of such a couple should - according to the Hai||om cross-descent naming practice - be of the father's *!nares*. With the possibility of translating *kai|onte* into *epata* the integration of these children does not cause a problem nor does it require a major change to either Owambo or Hai||om social practices. Those who know the corresponding name pairs are therefore quick to find the right Hai||om *kai|ons* if necessary. In cases where there is uncertainty about this correspondence, the "great names" may be created in what appears to be an ad hoc manner. In one case I asked a young woman who had an Owambo father but had grown up with her Hai||om mother and was already married and a mother herself what her surname was. There was some hesitation before she replied that it must be "Xams" (lit. "lion", not a common Hai||om *kai|ons*) since her father was of the *omukuanime* (lion) *epata*. Although this might be a very specific case, it underlines the general point made above in which I hinted at the negotiated character of the *kai|ons* conversion and its place in an unfolding process of interaction.

However, the translation of *epata* into *kai|ons* and vice versa in connection with cross-descent naming is only one of the modes that may be

used to rationalize the position of children of mixed couples or to clarify the position of children who were adopted into an Owambo family. In many cases social fatherhood overrules biological fatherhood, that is in those cases where the child is the product of a brief sexual liaison between an Owambo man and a Hai||om woman or where it was adopted into an Owambo family shortly after birth (usually if the mother died). The much more general function and significance of the conversion practice is that it allows not only these children but any Hai||om who spends periods of his or her life within Owambo society to maintain a sense of belonging. It is also a basis for working out clan/surname group membership and social relations with regard to both communities. By this means Hai||om living among an Owambo majority attempt to overcome their marginality by extending their identity into Owambo social organization.

There seems to be a parallel here with the various strategies of dealing with a livestock economy as described in the preceding chapter. Livestock herding and other forms of economic cooperation have to rely on a social grounding in order to allow not just cattle herding but also livestock ownership among southern African foragers. The strategies to achieve social grounding are numerous. Among the Hai||om with whom I worked there is only one individual who owns several (at the time: seven) head of cattle which are mostly herded together with the cattle of the neighbouring Owambo, either by Owambo or by Hai||om boys (or a mixed group).

Two ways of grounding made this development possible. Firstly, local Hai||om and Owambo stress their kinship relationship which is constituted by the fact that the Owambo clan name translates into the Hai||om surname which for both sides suggests mutual assistance and acceptance. Secondly, a daughter of the Hai||om man is married to an Owambo, not as a second wife or as a concubine as is often encountered, but apparently in regular wedlock. The Hai||om man even maintained that a cow was given as bridewealth.

These two strategies of social grounding, based on regular practices in Hai||om and Owambo society, are carried over into the interethnic

relationship and allow for cattle-keeping across ethnic lines. The close association with the Owambo allows the Hai||om man to keep his cattle without alienating the Hai||om in neighbouring places, although it forces him to exploit this Owambo connection by being generous towards fellow Hai||om. The Owambo provides a gun and ammunition for the Hai||om man to hunt. The game is shared according to traditional Hai||om conventions, at times leaving the hunter with no meat at all when the kill is consumed by the members of the neighbouring local group.

In this case the establishment of common ground with a neighbouring Owambo was particularly successful and lasting. In all other cases observed such an individual accumulation of livestock ownership could not be sustained. One of the underlying reasons is that Hai||om identity as a common ground defined in contrast to Owambo identity relies critically on the notion of Hai||om sharing and being in need as opposed to Owambo bargaining, accumulating riches and being self-sustaining and independent. Livestock ownership only becomes tolerable and viable when it is excorporated from Hai||om common ground into Owambo socio-economic organization as it were. This is not the product of an economic mechanism but it follows the continual negotiations of social values among Hai||om and is therefore subject to change.

Forms of social grounding follow a variety of paths and they are exploited in a number of ways. For a Hai||om to lend out livestock, as in the inverse *mafisa* system, allows for saving up, evading the pressure to share without threatening social bonds of mutual assistance. For a !Kung to engage in herding at a Tswana cattlepost may improve the ground for elaborate exchange relations with other !Kung. For the Owambo farmer to accept a goat from a Hai||om not only opens the prospect of offspring or meat but it also creates some obligation for the Hai||om to spend some time with the Owambo as a worker (paid in kind) when needed. Hence it becomes a tool in social grounding itself. For the Tswana cattle owner to lend out cattle to a !Kung can prevent cattle theft because it turns the well-being of the herd into a common interest for both parties involved. To construct dependent

clientship as a herder appears to be an attempt by the cattle owners to make the cattleless person accept a social grounding which operates with inscribed status positions.

Economic factors and even ecological factors such as the availability of other food resources and of alternative cattle owners to choose from is likely to influence whether such a social ground is accepted or not. But the kind of common ground partners engage in relies also on the kind of practices that were incorporated in social practice before. If, for instance, cattle owners are accepted as foster parents for Hai||om children it often follows that the whole family is likely to engage in herding for the fostering Owambo. If stigmatization prevents this kind of social grounding, permanent residence and herding services are much less likely. The ethnography suggests that stigmatization itself does not primarily arise from physical differences (although it is frequently phrased in these terms) or from the difference between Khoisan and Bantu languages. Rather, it seems that practices such as cattle keeping are far more crucial (Silberbauer and Kuper 1966:177-8). Grounding and practices such as the lending/herding of cattle are causally linked, but it is not always possible to distinguish cause and effect as most relationships have a history of long-standing interaction. There is however a recurring pattern: the attempt to construct, maintain and manipulate social ground as a prerequisite of social interaction.

Relations of Domination

The modes of integration and changes of identities described in this chapter lack the kind of violent imposition and conflict which would make it easy to account for the loss or creation of separate identities as inevitable consequences of enforced dependence. A mechanism by which a person is stripped of his or her identity followed by a reintegration into society in a different status, as it is established in African systems of slavery (Kopytoff



Plate 3.3 Skinning and cutting up a *!arib* (steenbok).

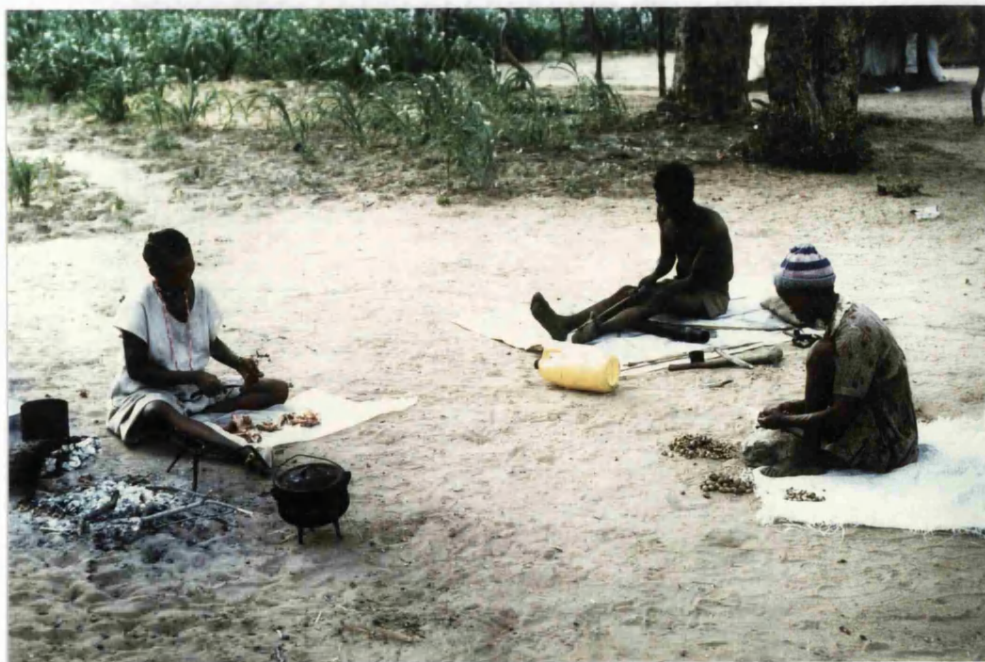


Plate 3.4 A couple and their daughter at |Gomais. The woman cracks mangetti nuts, the man carves arrow shafts, and the daughter prepares meat received from her husband (a farm worker).

1986:65), is different from the situation discussed here, not only because the ≠Akhoe interdependence with Owambo lacks overt violence but, above all, because there is continuity between stages in the changes of identity.

The Hai||om practice of surname conversion is an attempt to link existing identities. It is also a strategy to end marginality by extending identity while retaining social links with the Hai||om community in the context of confrontation with the Owambo, their economic power and their political dominance in the region. Hai||om integration into the Owambo sphere of hegemony may leave them in a subordinate social position but not necessarily one in which they are separated and stigmatized.

But the use of Hai||om *kai | onte* in interethnic relations shows an active involvement of Hai||om in the translation and even in the creation of "great names". It is highly unlikely that this practice, as it is, was thought up by Owambo and then imposed on the Hai||om even though the Owambo preparedness to integrate non-Owambo into their society plays an important role. As for Hai||om oral history, there is no indication that these names were imposed on them, nor does anyone today resent this naming practice. The practice of converting surnames is taken as given, not as given by Owambo neighbours but by virtue of universal rules that parallel the Hai||om classificatory kinship system. Hai||om claim *epata* identities that cover the whole spectrum, including some high status clan names. Given the Owambos' generally unfavourable view of the way of life of the Hai||om and other "Kwankala", it is indeed questionable whether Owambo would have implemented the system as it works today. It is illuminating that the Owambo who accept the Hai||om claim to an *epata* identity are those who live some distance from their main settlement centres and who rely on Hai||om labour and cooperation to some degree. However, it is also unlikely that the practice could have been established and then survived if it operated against the agropastoralists' intentions. It matched the Owambo interest in incorporating "Bushmen" both historically, in the course of migrating into the land they now occupy, and also currently, as part of their attempt to recruit cheap labour and to compensate for the effects of labour migration.

Therefore, Owambo economic strategy and political hegemony as well as Hai||om principles of social organization are satisfied. Just as ≠Akhoe try to link up with the agropastoralist economy in order to gain access to agricultural and other products, the conversion practice is an active strategy on the Hai||om side to create lasting social relations which, however, relies on the Owambo as the stronger party. The translation from *kai|ons* into *epata* does not play such an important role in the *Sâukhoe* context, that is, among those Hai||om who are fully dependent and fully integrated into Owambo society. This is to be expected as the practice fades, firstly, in proportion to increased Owambo settlement on ≠Akhoe land which is no longer reliant on ≠Akhoe local knowledge or labour, and, secondly, in proportion to the decreasing relevance of the ≠Akhoe community and the decreasing emphasis on separate identity in the everyday life of the *Sâukhoe*. *Sâukhoe* are not only Hai||om who eat millet (*sâu-e*) but those who either independently or with the aid of an Owambo patron pay millet as tax or tribute to Owambo headmen and (in Ondonga) to the king.

It is difficult to know how far back in time this practice goes and how much economic and political pressure there was on the ≠Akhoe to establish such links. Today the ≠Akhoe in the area still rely to a considerable degree on hunting and gathering and on their mobility which enables them to switch between modes of subsistence and between modes of transaction. They have therefore retained a degree of autonomous choice with respect to the intensity with which they want to engage with neighbouring peoples. That choice has rapidly disappeared for Hai||om further to the south who have become firmly integrated into the commercial farming industry. It also disappears in a situation of inclusive integration into Owambo society.

The flexibility of their social organization (and the positive response of the neighbouring agropastoralists) makes this expansion of identity possible. It decreases isolation and facilitates integration. The integration in turn then affects group identity, also in a way that can lead to Hai||om losing both *kai|ons* and *epata* identity. Therefore, changes in identity may

precede integration in some ways, or at least identity and integration are concurrently changing. Identity is not simply contingent on the degree of isolation but interactive with it. Isolation does not determine a state of identity (strong identity caused by great isolation, weak identity caused by small isolation) nor does it determine the quality of identity (ascribed versus self-determined).

Conclusion

Without some degree of geographical as well as socio-economic closeness and mutual awareness, a link-up between Hai||om and their neighbours as I have described above could not have come into being. The recent Kalahari Debate shows that no forager group in southern Africa was completely isolated. What needs emphasizing with regard to the Hai||om case is that the foragers themselves have made efforts to decrease the distance, to link up with neighbouring groups by establishing common ground. Establishing common ground with neighbouring agropastoralists from a position of integral social identity, is part and parcel of a historical process in which the mastery over social relations is at stake. To label this process "bantuization" or conversely "bushmanization" conceals the interactive nature of the process which cannot be understood on the basis of its overall outcome alone. The practices of naming and social reference discussed here suggest that the Hai||om practice is motivated by expected situational advantages in a potentially open process. They do not value the retention of a disengaged segregated identity in all contexts as highly as they value the expected pay-off from linking up with other social groups, including other residential groups, kinship groups or other ethnic groups. The way in which they make this attempt is the "social style" that remains in conditions of interethnic rapprochement.

To this process of link-up Hai||om not only bring their own ways of organizing common ground but also their categories and classifications of

their social and natural environment which continue to affect individual action in transactions and continue to have limiting force with regard to the nature of social relationships in which Hai||om are involved.

Chapter Four

Classifying the Environment and Shared Knowledge

Introduction

Recent debates in comparative hunter-gatherer studies have taken a fresh look at the relation between the attitude of hunter-gatherers towards their environment and the way they construct social relations. The form of these constructions cannot be predicted on the basis of hunting and gathering as a subsistence technique. Bird-David's (1990) suggestion that sharing relations among foragers are generated through their representation of nature as a parental "sharing environment" was criticized by Brightman (1993) who emphasized cases "of adversarial images of human-environmental interaction". The debate has shifted interest away from the fact that foragers are subject to a number of different environmental pressures. Instead, the various ways in which the animate and inanimate environment become the objects of hunter-gatherers' representations is the focus of much current research. This chapter introduces some of the classifications used by Hai || om when dealing with their environment: giving and following directions, landscape terms, the classification of food and of "taboo" objects and actions. In all of these cases the question that will be asked is how these classifications form a background of shared knowledge which serves to define social relations. This chapter includes data on spatial knowledge and orientation elicited through cognitive science methodology. At the same time an attempt is made to develop an approach to the classification of land that incorporates the cognitive dimension of classification while preserving the importance of social practice in the construction of shared knowledge.

Food Classification

Hai||om, especially when trying to get access to non-gathered food, often play down the importance and of bush food. They do acknowledge that food from the bush, such as mangetti, is freely available. Compared with processed food available in the shop, little value is attached to foodstuffs from the bush. Since neighbouring groups also eat food from the bush (white farmers like to eat *nou-e* mushrooms, Owambo eat grubs of the mopane tree), it seems not to be the case that Hai||om are merely reproducing an external stigmatization. Outside stigmatization may play a role in some contexts but it cannot, for instance, account for the fact that one type of root is regarded as less "proper" to eat than another (see below). Evaluative comparisons such as that between wild and processed foodstuffs are not only - and may not even primarily be - based on nutritional or taste characteristics of these food items. This becomes apparent when we consider the context in which Hai||om classify food items.

When I was investigating ≠Akhoe botanical names in the existing linguistic literature I came across an edible root called *!nomeb* (no. 11 in appendix one) which never came up in the gathering returns I had recorded up to then (and rarely so afterwards). The girls who were otherwise very able in identifying edible plants referred me to the elder women when I was enquiring about this particular root. They pointed out to me that the ≠*gurokhoen* (lit. the first people, i. e. preceding generations) used to eat this root but that the *buru|goan* (lit. the children of the Boers, i. e. those who get maize meal and sugar from white Afrikaner farmers) do not eat it. The two elderly women I talked to then contrasted the *buru|goan* with the *aramkhoen* or *!hamkhoen* (the poor people) which they themselves were, the *!nomeb* being the food eaten by these people: "This (*!nomeb*) is food of our garden (*sida !hanas*). It is planted by God (*!Khub*), he lets it grow and we eat from that garden. He plants, and we just eat and don't plant. God gives

it."¹ Since not only the elderly women but also the children readily ate the *!nomeb* on some occasions showed that these comments were not so much about actual eating and refusing to eat as about the social value attached to different foods. In a similar vein the two women concerned very often ate "the food of the Boers" themselves. But since they relied on relatives (or the anthropologist) to provide them with these food items they chose to designate themselves as "poor people".

Thus, food is a marker for social boundaries and the image of a "giving environment" is part of this classifying practice. It is worth noting that the Hai||om women were not talking about "God's garden" as is common in the European context but rather about "the people's garden", a resource that is there to be used without prior work, religious service or permission, available to everyone and used by the "poor". The food of the Boers is also "given" but its high reputation seems at least partly due to its role as being available (within limits) as a surplus food, especially from the perspective of senior Hai||om women who have direct and daily access to gathered foods. Note also that the differential evaluation of foods is less apparent in this context of a more elaborate explication of differences between foods. Wild foods are represented positively as "God's food" but so are those processed foods which are not represented - another possible opposition - as ||*Gâuab's* or *Satanab's* food. I have only come across the label "||*Gâuab's* food" in conjunction with liquor, which makes people fight and behave in asocial ways. In all of these cases shared classifications are utilized to mark social relationships between people.

In a similar way everyday language distinguishes food from the bush (excluding meat) as *khaira-e* from other kinds of food (again excluding

¹I do not see this statement as a mere reflection of missionary teaching. Firstly, it is in accordance with all other religious statements I have recorded (for example on death, hunting magic, the medicine dance) where a personal, omnipotent and active God is taken for granted. Secondly, because the Finnish missionaries, as well as the Owambo evangelists currently active, emphasize the human task of planting fields.

meat) called *xaba-e* (*xabas*, literally bowl, vessel, i. e. food you eat from a bowl).² When distinguishing the "dished" from the "undished", some items regularly appear under the opposed categories of *khaira-e* and *xaba-e* as shown in these two columns:

<i>Khaira-e</i>	<i>Xaba-e</i>
<i>Gom-e</i> (mangetti)	<i>Ba-e</i> (maize)
! <i>No-e</i> (wild orange)	<i>Sâu-e</i> (millet)
‡ <i>Au-e</i> (wild berries)	<i>Bungi-e</i> (beans)
<i>Aru-e</i> (wild potatoes)	
<i>Ani-e</i> (flying ants)	

Table 4.1 ‡Akhoe food classification

The criterion given for this categorization of foodstuffs is the general mode of acquisition: *khaira-e* is food gathered in the bush (*haiaib*) and frequently eaten directly, whereas *xaba-e* is food that ultimately comes from a garden (!*hanas*) and needs further processing before it is then eaten from a bowl (*xabas*). Strictly speaking this explanation does not hold because in actual practice harvesting a garden is often not very different from gathering food. Beans remain in the *xaba-e* category even if they come from one's own garden. Other garden fruits which may be eaten directly from the garden also remain in the *xaba-e* category. Millet was still talked about as *xaba-e* even when it was freely given by the church. The actual manner of acquisition whether by a person's own effort or not, bought or given is therefore subordinated to the general representation. The work effort involved in *xore* (gathering food) is often stressed but only work done in one's own garden or done for payment are referred to as work (*sisun*). Therefore, in the everyday representation, *khaira-e* is the product of *xore* (gathering in the bush) while *xaba-e* is the product of *sisun* (work). *Khaira-e*, food from the bush, is freely accessible, whereas *xaba-e* has to be

²‡*û-e* is a general term for both types of food. Some informants talked about *khaira-‡û-e* as opposed to *xaba-‡û-e*. ‡*û* (to eat) is the verb used in both cases.

produced, bought, stolen or received as a payment or as a gift. Other implicit aspects of this general explicit distinction appear when informants are asked to classify other food. Milk is regarded as *xaba-e* unless being contrasted with tinned milk which, as a commercial consumer product, cannot be obtained straight from a cow. *Lambika* liquor, a high alcohol beverage made from mangetti and other wild fruits, is sometimes treated as food which is eaten (≠*û*). Although it is made from gathered fruits it is regarded as *xaba-e* just as is oil (made either from mangettis or bought at the shop), indicating that "unprocessed" versus "processed" is a relevant complementary opposition.

At the same time the opposition between free wild food and commercially produced food is also an opposition between those who have to live on the former and those who have privileged access to the latter types of food. It is present not just as an explicit rationalization but also in everyday talk about food.

Meat is set apart as a separate category altogether. Although Hai||om use the verb *xore* indiscriminately, regardless of whether it refers to hunting for meat or gathering vegetable food, meat is not subsumed under *khaira-e* or *xaba-e* but forms a category of its own ||*gan-e* (meat), supported by a distinct verb for its consumption *o* (to eat meat).

Parallel to *khaira-e*, edible animals are represented as "God's animals", in contrast to the dangerous carnivorous animals such as lions or crocodiles which are not eaten by Hai||om. I was assured that in the past access to wild animals was unrestricted. Hai||om visiting to other places could freely hunt in these places or when travelling. It is accepted, though, that visitors to a place will share the meat they have hunted with the people of that locality. Anyway, if the place is unfamiliar to them, they will not hunt on their own. With regard to access *khaira-e*, *xaba-e* or ||*gan-e* differ but they are all subject to demand sharing and obligations to give. The mode of acquisition, whether by gathering "received" from nature, by acquisition through hunting or by demand or exchange from another person, does not pre-determine the particular food item to be shared, exchanged or sold.

However, *khaira-e* and the meat of wild animals differ in that they are subject to rules of *soxa*, taboo, which do not apply in any circumstances to *xaba-e* or the meat of domesticated animals (see below).

There is evidence to suggest that the social classification of foodstuffs is not a recent phenomenon. The designation *buru | goan* (children of the Boers) is only one way to designate Hai||om with permanent access to maize and other industrially processed foodstuffs. It is a term that is not commonly used. Other social designators are apparently purely situational and individual. On one occasion I heard a woman from Botos talking about the *haiaibkhoen* (lit. the bush-people) of Sanika who had no gardens at all during that year but this remained an individual witty remark that was not widely shared. In contrast to this the category of those Hai||om with privileged access to millet and other agricultural products, the so-called *Sâukhoe* (lit. millet people), is widely known and firmly established in everyday conversation.

Since they are located near the tribal centre of the Ndonga, the *Sâukhoe* may for some time in the past have provided an established route of access into the agropastoralist economy of the Owambo. As mediators with firm relations with Owambo the *Sâukhoe* may have played an important role in the context of long-term and long-distance trade relations in the way they continue to be important in present day localized exchange relations. Today ≠Akhoe identify people already associated with Owambo as *Sâukhoe* when they encounter ≠Akhoe who live permanently or temporarily in Owambo homesteads and who are in a client relation to them. When asked to characterize the *Sâukhoe*, ≠Akhoe refer not only to the fact that they live on millet, that they have followed the Owambo in the course of trade expeditions or pastoral transhumance, and that they stay in or near Owambo but also refer to the *Sâukhoe* way of talking. Typically, *Sâukhoe* have adopted Owambo pronunciation of Hai||om words. Clicks are often left out (*khakhasun* instead of ||*kha*||*khasun*, to learn), "r" is replaced by "l" (*xole* instead of *xore*, to gather), and "s" becomes "sh" (*shores* instead of *sores*, sun). Other Hai||om tend to make fun of these changes which they see as

incorrect language use and as signs of language loss. Many *Sâukhoe* eventually only speak Owambo. There is a slightly mocking undertone in descriptions of *Sâukhoe* as ≠Akhoe who have given up their language and way of life. The term may therefore be used loosely, also in a joking manner, while in a stricter sense it is usually applied to those ≠Akhoe who live near the Ondonga tribal centre to the west of ≠Akhoe country. In the past this would have been the prototypical area where ≠Akhoe lived in close interaction with agropastoralists, increasingly isolated from shrinking hunting and gathering resources and from the core ≠Akhoe settlement area that became more and more curtailed.³

Sâukhoe, like the other band clusters (see land classification, below), do not form a corporate subgroup as they live dispersed among Owambo. They have no political representation of their own, they strive to look like Owambo in terms of clothing- and housing-style and, due to intermarriage and language shift, it can be difficult to distinguish *Sâukhoe* from Owambo. The term does not refer to a virtual group (those further away): I have encountered individuals and families who said "*Shaukhoe da ge*." (We are *Sâukhoe*). However, it is on the whole more of a term of ascription by other Hai||om. Further it can be interpreted as an extension of the established system whereby an area of settlement (the Ndonga centre in the west), becomes identified with an important resource (*sâu-e*, millet) and a social group of people. The "new" element is that the ||*amagu* selling and barter transactions between Hai||om and Owambo are complemented by *magu* reciprocal exchange relations with the *Sâukhoe* who have good relations with Owambo and with other Hai||om. It provides an institutionalized tool for intensifying the relations with neighbouring agropastoralists. In effect this

³I take Lebzelter's mentioning of "Dama Buschmänner" as an indication that historically there have been people around for some time whose status was similar to that of the *Sâukhoe*. Although Lebzelter translates the name "Dama Bushpeople" as "rich Bushmen" it is more likely that what was meant were "the Bushmen of the Dama [Ndonga Owambo]" which matches the way *dama* is used today by Hai||om, namely, as an ethnonym for the Ndonga subgroup of the Owambo rather than an adjective.

widens Hai||om access to resources, while there are other strategies to set apart places, foodstuffs and other objects which I want to discuss in the following section.

Setting Apart Places, Actions and Objects

Although Hai||om possess many social strategies to discourage privileged access to resources and social groupings, there are restrictions which, in conventionalized ways, set apart as *soxa* (taboo) places, and, above all some of the yield gained through hunting and gathering. Resources that are classified as *soxa* are set apart from free access and consumption not by declaration but by their "nature".

Soxa is not explicitly rationalized on religious grounds since no reference is made to deities or ancestral beings that may have implemented the rules which apply to *soxa*. Nor does its application involve religious specialists (!*gaiaokwa*) or practices such as the medicine dance. However, in an indirect manner *soxa* does relate to religious notions because transgressing the rules of *soxa* results in *tsû!ob* (bad luck) or |*aeb* (disease), believed to result from immoral or improper behaviour (≠*hanu toma*, lit. not straight). Such notions often involve reference to !*Khub* (God), the activities of !*gaiaokwa*, and medicine dances. The conventionalized character of classifying something as *soxa* is particularly powerful because it is concealed in the nature of things. In this respect this process by which conventions are institutionalized is not unlike other cases of naturalizing strategies (see Douglas 1987[1986]) including totemism (see Lévi-Strauss 1965[1962]).

In sum, as an institutionalized way of marking off certain activities *soxa* is attributed to a relationship between a particular person and a class of features of the environment at a specific point in time and to a relationship between persons or social groups. I only came across one case where *soxa* relates directly to a place and its resources. There is a cattlepost at | Gomais that carries the name *soxa* | *gomais* (place of the *soxa* mangetti

tree) but local Hai||om do not know why it is called by that name nor do they act differently towards the *mangetti* trees in that area.⁴ There are other cases reported from Damaraland (Eiseb pers. com.) where certain places such as hilltops were said to be *soxa* and which were not visited by women and children.

Soxa provides an idiom to express disapproval of the consumption of particular animals (or parts of them) or plants by specific people but it is not used as a means of restricting the appropriation of natural resources as such. It is therefore not primarily a hallmark of Hai||om attitude towards "nature" but a medium of expressing social relations among Hai||om by classifying animals, plants or other natural features which are marked off, set apart by taboos.

The notion of *soxa* has already been described by Fourie who somewhat misleadingly states that among some subgroups of the Hai||om virtually all major game species are *soxa* (cf. Fourie 1966[1928]:100-2). In context this means that these animals had to be tasted by the *gaikhoeb* of a camp and that "certain categories of people may eat only certain prescribed portions of the animal" (Fourie 1966[1928]:100). There is no taboo placed on the killing of any animal. It is perfectly acceptable and even desirable for anyone to kill a snake, even a non-poisonous python, but all Hai||om I have talked to regarded the consumption of any snake as *soxa*.⁵ Similarly, anyone (including women) may kill an iguana but then give it to someone who feels

⁴Only a middle-aged man who visited | Gomaïs from further north tried to give me an etymological explanation, since I kept asking him as to why this place was given its name. He said that there used to be one *soxa* *mangetti* tree people would not eat from. But that tree had disappeared a long time ago so that he had never seen it (*mangetti* trees have a rather short life-span). Thus, people would now just eat. When I kept asking further questions he reminded me that there was a similar tree from which Adam and Eve ate.

⁵The same applies to monkeys (| *gorab*, *Cercopithecus pygerythrus*) and baboons (|| *arub*, *Papio ursinus*) which are said "to look just like people" and therefore should not be eaten. Iguanas (|| *nareb*, unidentified) and pangolin (|| *khamab*, *Manis temminckii*) are said to be *soxa* for women only.

safe to eat it. In much the same way the first fruit which should be "tasted" (*tsâ*) by a local elder before being eaten by other people is in fact a portion of the first full load of fruit gathered by anyone.

Not all personal food taboos are regarded as *soxa*, at least not unanimously so. For instance a large number of people of both sexes and all ages do not eat *!arib* (steenboek) because it is said "to make the stomach ache" but this fact is not sufficient for it to be classified in general as *soxa*. The threat of illness can, however, be seen as a necessary aspect of the institutionalized concept of *soxa*. In actual practice the connection between bodily harm and *soxa* ranges between explanatory uses of *soxa* in rationalizing diseases and more instrumental-preventative uses of *soxa* in the context of individual strategies. The following case situations illustrate this.

Case situation 1

It had been pointed out to me that during female initiation rites the food collected by the initiate and her hut are *soxa* to the men. The girl's head is covered with strings of beads to prevent her and others from being blinded in the course of the initiation.⁶

When I inquire whether the failure to take this precaution was responsible for the blindness of particular people in the camp I am told that "Keres' mother ate the meat of a python which made her blind", and "Au+gaob's father became blind because he ate the head of a female kudu which is also *soxa*." Tsab's partial blindness is, however, said to have been caused when he got a thorn in his eye while hunting in the bush once. (Fieldnotes R4, 16.1.92)

Case situation 2

A senior man from Natie has shot an ostrich on the way to |Kham|kham with the gun lent to him by the local Owambo. His son and son-in-law bring in the meat which is cut up and hung on a branched stick next to the *olupare*. The *gaikhoeb* (senior man) of |Kham|kham cooks some of the meat in a pot, saying that today it is only the men who are eating and that the meat will only be shared the following day. While the pot is on the fire

⁶The head cover (*sabeb*) that was shown to me not only had strings covering the eyes (||*gabis*) but a single long string of beads across the top of the head which ended in a small circle worn on the back (|*habikwa*). For a more detailed description of Hai||om initiation rites see chapter seven.

a piece of meat is grilled and eaten by the *gaikhoeb* on the side. Later he starts eating the boiled meat, which he shares with the young men. Then his wife demands some meat and after her protest she and the other women get a share. Early the next morning meat is cooked again, this time at the *olupare* (the *!khais*, the men's fire). I am told that they are cooking *||khaib*, the chest, which is *soxa* for the women. The women keep away from the fire where the meat is cooked and is later distributed by the *gaikhoeb* to the other men (including visitors). In the meantime the older children are given some meat to cook at the ordinary cooking place. Since on this day the number of women and children is fairly large (some twenty people), the meat given to them is quickly finished. The wife of the *gaikhoeb* therefore loudly demands to be given some of the meat that is cooked at the *!khais*. Her husband's first reaction is to claim that the meat is *soxa* and should be eaten by him and his sons. Only after prolonged protest from his wife, who has come to sit at the *!khais*, he shares with the women. His wife receives some meat, even of the *||khaib*, which she shares with the other women sitting some ten metres to the east. While the meat is being finished on that very morning the hunter, himself a *gaikhoeb* of his camp, stands in the background and, as on the first day, does not receive any of the meat. (Fieldnotes L46-47, 1.9.91)

Case situation 3

Koitaïs, a young unmarried woman, had continued to ask for some time when we would make a gathering excursion by car to a place some 20 kilometres away which is rich in *≠hûi-e* that are ripe now. On the day we go the average return is 0.75 kg within two hours, although the fruit is only just ripe and has to be picked from the tree. The trip ends earlier than planned because Koitaïs becomes very sick, with vomiting and fever. After returning to Gornais I ask one of the elderly women who was on the trip whether they have bothered to have a *gaikhoebi* (*gaikhoeb/s* neuter singular) taste the first *≠hûi-e* of the season. Her spontaneous response is that because they did not, Koitaïs fell sick on this trip. Other people I question separately (including Koitaïs herself) confirm that because of her thoughtlessness and her failure to give some of the *soxa* fruit to the elders which has caused Koitaïs to fall sick. (Fieldnotes G74-75, 8.4.91)

The pragmatic usage of *soxa* shows that it can serve as an ex post facto explanation in case one while it is used strategically in case two. The third case situation, however, shows how the two aspects are intertwined. The explanatory factor strengthens the notion of *soxa* in that it is instructive to others and underlines the effectiveness of *soxa*. Any strategic usage of *soxa* relies on repeated cases of explanatory usage, especially since there are

also other, sceptical rationalizations. Enquiring about attitudes to the first fruit rule I was repeatedly told that failure to observe the rule would lead to bad luck (*!oas*) and that it would make children sick (*|aesun*). However, some individuals maintained that there are no *soxa* things or that "there may be *soxa* things but I do not believe in them" (Fieldnotes F29, 26.2.91). Reactions to Koitais' case (case three above) also ranged from firm conviction to doubt. Case situation three therefore indicates the variability of activity in the arena provided by the institution of *soxa*.

It should be stressed that attitudes range from embracing to rejecting the implications of *soxa* in actual practice because earlier reports overemphasized the "ceremonial" and juridical character of *soxa* as an idealized rule. The \neq hûi was presented by Fourie as the first fruit (1927:56) but it is only one wild fruit among many (including mangetti) to which a first fruit rule applies. This "rule" may be phrased in the abstract as stating that the *gaikhoen* (old people, senior people of the camp) should first taste (*tsâ*) the first fruits of a season. However, a legalistic understanding of "the first fruit ceremony" (see Fourie 1927, 1966 [1928]) distorts the practice in several ways. It often happens that there last season's mangettis are still available when the new ones ripen. At the beginning of the 1991 season I observed a *gaikhoeb* at the evening fire keeping his "new" mangettis separate from the others and turning down his grandchild, who tried to take some from his heap, by arguing that "the new mangettis are *soxa*". This incident shows that, although the extent to which the first-fruit rule is obeyed depends in practice on the individual elder and the younger people involved, the classification itself does not rely on authoritative proclamation *ex officio*, at least nowadays. Rather, it relies on the acceptance of a particular view of nature more generally. *Soxa* is therefore not so much a ceremonial or ritual matter as a cognitive parameter. Although it is widely agreed that in the past *soxa* rules were observed more conscientiously, it is denied that there was a great deal of "ceremony" involved. I was told that in the past when the old people tasted the first fruit, "they were just given a little. Then they just said to the others: I have tasted, now you can eat.

That was it." (Fieldnotes G76, 8.4.91)

Agreement on the condition of *soxa* prevents conflict over meat distribution without introducing an explicit set of rules. The notion of *soxa* ensures access to meat for less able elderly hunters. It strengthens the position of elders without seriously interfering with other demands since the largest part of game meat is not by general agreement recognized as *soxa*, and is therefore not restricted in access.

Focus on the "rules" of *soxa* does not make clear that quantitatively we are dealing with a fairly small limitation because when some of the first fruits are given to the most senior person all others will take from the new fruits soon afterwards (as observed at the beginning of the 1992 season). In these cases the actual quantitative loss suffered by the collection of the first fruit is negligible. It is a symbolic act not so much because it does not "really" interfere with the individual appropriation of natural resources but because it contains, by implication, an acceptance of the qualitative differentiation between the elders (men and women) and everybody else. With regard to the distribution of game it also implies a differentiation between elder men and everybody else (women, young men, and children).

The two aspects, classification and access to resources, are more closely connected in those cases where more than a token allocation of first fruit is at stake. Case two underlines that this is so when *soxa* is applied in the context of distributing a large game animal between a group of men and a group of women. Unlike the cases discussed so far, what is at stake here is not the *soxa* object as such (the first fruit, the python) but the satisfactory allocation of *soxa* parts to the parties involved. Furthermore, it shows that first fruit tasting is fairly, though not completely, indifferent to gender difference. In this particular case the divide between men and women is clear-cut and prevalent. There is simply no animal or part of an animal that would be *soxa* to men and could only be consumed by women. But again, a legalistic presentation of this aspect of *soxa* would underrate the individual manipulation that is possible. At least at present there is no one who would actually stop a woman who was determined to taste a *soxa* animal but it

would be assumed that she was potentially putting herself at risk from unknown dangers.

It is noteworthy that no cultivated plants or domesticated animals are considered *soxa* but that game hunted with a gun has the same *soxa* properties as that hunted with bows and arrows. This underlines the fact that *soxa* is presented not as an abstract manipulable rule but as a natural attribute of the object concerned as soon as it is considered *soxa*. However, this obscures to some degree the fact that *soxa* is often a relational property and that attempts are made to influence the relation that constitutes it. In one instance a young man who had killed a *!arib* (steenbok) with his gun exchanged the meat for maize meal with a local Owambo. The rationale he gave, was that the meat would have been *soxa* for him and some of the women (because their stomach aches when they eat it) but they could all eat the maize meal.

While the actual amount of *soxa* meat or fruit gained by the senior person is usually small, it seems to be the prime concern in case two in which the *gaikhoeb* tries to secure the best pieces and to protect himself from demand sharing. After returning from | Kham | kham where the episode took place I told people at | Gomais about this incident which has since then been retold to me several times. Most people regarded the old man's behaviour as hilarious in that it was so obvious that he was using the notion of *soxa* to secure resources for himself and to avoid sharing demands by the women.

As the following examples show, both aspects, the relational and the inherent attributes of *soxa*, are always potentially present and can be activated. At the same time they provide templates that delimit possible trajectories in the allocation of food and things:

Case situation 4

Domokhoeb, a single elderly man, has taken an old roof from a hut which had been deserted together with other belongings of a man who died. The dead man was not a close relative of his but he says that the others are

afraid to take the old roof because they consider it *soxa*. When I ask him whether he is not afraid he says that he is old, he knows God and he knows that all men have to die and that it is the young ones who are afraid. (Fieldnotes E38, 25.1.91)

Case situation 5

A python has eaten the dog of a FNDC worker. One of the managers kills the python which is brought to the main garage under the attention of almost everybody present. The python is skinned by an Owambo who wants to use the skin. The meat has to be thrown away because it is turned down by the Hai||om. They say that if there were !Kung here they would certainly eat it because the !Kung eat all snakes while they are *soxa* to the Hai||om. I then ask whether the !Kung do not have any *soxa* things and the answer is: "Yes, they eat everything". In a word then nothing is sacred to a !Kung. There are also disapproving stories told about individual Hai||om who would eat snakes. (Fieldnotes E39, 25.1.91)

Case situation 6

Ou!naeb has hunted a *!arib* (steenbok) with his bow and arrow. Its skin is given to the dogs and the meat is divided into two pots. The women eat their bits in front of Ou!naeb's hut while the men eat at a separate fire not far from Tsab's hut [a few metres away]. This fire is identified as *!hai | ais* and *||kharakhoeku di | aiba* (fire of the grown-up men). (Fieldnotes K66, 11.8.91)

As case four shows, any list of *soxa* items or objects in itself would be misleading since they are *soxa* with regard to somebody but not to anybody. At the same time knowledge about the constellations in which certain animals and animal parts become *soxa* for certain people, is widely shared among Hai||om. It is widely accepted but not felt as an imposition.

The shared knowledge about the condition of *soxa* does not imply uniform behaviour though. In case six the shared knowledge leads to an allocation of animal parts without any explicit reference to *soxa* or any debate about it. In case five there is no need for anyone to employ the *soxa* feature strategically as nobody shows signs of eating the python but in the discussion that accompanies the skinning of the snake *soxa* features elaborately as a means to define ethnic boundaries. It is implicitly

recognized that practices relating to *soxa* do not apply for people who do not believe in them. One informant self-consciously told me that since the "pastors" told them about the word of God, he no longer thinks that there are any *soxa* things. When I replied that maybe the pastors just did not know about these things the reply was: "Maybe there are *soxa* things but I do not believe in them."⁷

However, the "*soxa* complex" most certainly earlier had aspects of an informal institution which defined the basis and the limits of individual social action. The fact that there are sceptical views about *soxa*, and maybe more so than in the past, may itself be a reaction to attempts to take strategic advantage of the institution of *soxa*. People whom I challenged about collecting mangettis without observing the first fruit rule responded " | *Gomte* | *honkhoeba u hâ toma*." (The mangettis have no boss.). And an old man who himself demanded that the first fruit rule be kept said openly in front of women and children: "In the past the men hunted and came back with an eland, they ate it separately and said that it was *soxa* for women and children. But they just wanted to eat a lot of it."

Despite the scepticism and lack of dogmatism, it is still widely held that it is local elders who should get a share of the meat hunted and a portion of the first fruit to taste. At places like | Gomais with a number of local groups and *gaikhoen* (elders), the tasting of first fruits is ascribed to that group which is regarded as most closely related to the place in question even if its *gaikhoen* are considerably younger in years than other, "immigrant", elders presently living at the place. Correspondingly, I was told that there was no need to have the first harvest tasted by a local *gaikhoeb*

⁷The pastors' knowledge about *soxa* things is in fact very limited. And since there is at present no Hai||om-speaking evangelist working in the area, Hai||om who go to church are not urged to give up believing in *soxa* things. But it does not seem mere chance that the explanatory aspect of *soxa* is foregrounded in the context of intergroup contact and at a point in time when religious specialists appear on the scene. Both are part of a process in which formal theological institutions "take over social functions which once were played out in open, mutual social action between individuals" (Bieseke 1978:939).

when the source was nowhere near a local group and local *gaikhoen*.

Soxa is sometimes also used to rationalize personal food taboos against eating certain animals such as steenbok, tortoise, or hare which are not generally regarded *soxa*. There is also a sense of local elders' responsibility with regard to the tasting of first fruits. But following the discussion about "totemic" systems (see Lévi-Strauss 1965[1962]:116), it needs to be pointed out that the basis of the *soxa* classification is not an association between individuals and natural species. Rather, these personal associations seem to follow a social logic of what is "good to think" (Lévi-Strauss 1965[1962]:116) and "good to prohibit" (Tambiah 1969, see Morris 1979:131-4).

As already demonstrated in the previous chapter, the Hai||om kinship and naming system is not a "totemic" one. Those surnames (*kai | onte*) that clearly refer to a natural species such as !Nabari (!*nabari*, a small onion), ≠Aroa (≠*aro-haib*, a tree), or Gobose (*koseb*, a bird) are exceptions and have no further implications for everyday life. Given the occurrence of totemic groups among Khoe-speaking hunter-gatherers of the northern Kalahari, mostly so-called River Bushmen (see Cashdan 1986), there is a possibility that the ancestors of today's Hai||om may have had a "totemic social organization" but the discussion about Australian "totemism" shows that stating this is not saying much. The Hai||om of today do not organize access to places and their resources along "totemic" lines nor do they recognize differences between social groups in terms of an association with certain species.⁸

Their universal kin classification, the cross-sex naming principle of surname groups, and the exogamy of local groups and name groups facilitate the dispersion of entitlements to resources and allegiances to places. Kinship and naming are used as idioms in expanding access and entitlements and not in order to protect or guard resources. However, with regard to regulating

⁸It seems that in none of the Khoisan groups (Barnard 1992:12 Cashdan 1986:157) nor in the case of the Ndonga Owambo (Tuupainen 1970:26) did totemic groups ritually or otherwise hold territories of their own.

marriage links the notion of *soxa* is sometimes applied to justify the prohibition of marriage between individuals with the same surname. The association of *soxa* with the "natural" state of things makes it more powerful than the simple notion of prohibition and "not being straight" (\neq *hanu toma*).

A more fundamental parallel between Hai||om social organization and "totemic" systems lies in the fact that the notion of *soxa* is part of a more fundamental practice of classifying that provides distinctions between social groups and their relations with reference to a body of shared knowledge about the natural environment.

The Classification of Land

In the case of "totemic systems" such as those of Australian Aborigines, hunter-gatherers represent their ritual relation with aspects of the environment as causally related to the reproduction of natural resources, but no related complex of ideas has been reported from "San" groups. Equally, "Bushmen" lack the concept of a sacred landscape or the notion of restricted knowledge about the environment and its reproduction. Social relations between "San" groups are not predicated on differential knowledge and responsibility with regard to a certain species or place. On the contrary, the widely shared knowledge about the natural environment has become part of the popular myths about "Bushmen". Over a long period the largely negative image of "Bushmen" was couched in terms of their association with nature, with the "bush" but more recently the "Bushmen" have been presented as "close to nature living, nature loving, born environmentalists" (Perrott 1992:197).

Popular reports attributed fabulous orientation and tracking skills to the "Bushmen", not as individuals but as an ethnic group. In the recent past the tracking and orientation skills attributed to "Bushmen" intensified the process in which they were drawn into the armed conflicts in southern Africa, the effects of which are still felt today (see Lee and Hurlich

1987[1982]:334, Marshall and Ritchie 1984:7-8). First in Marshall and Ritchie's list of misunderstandings threatening "San" existence in the modern world is the notion "that Ju/wasi inherit acquired characteristics, like knowing instinctively where they are; knowing instinctively where game is (or where SWAPO is hiding); being born with the knowledge to track, etc." (1984:85). The quotes by white army personnel compiled by Gordon show that the attribution of such superhuman skills went hand in hand not only with psychological warfare (Gordon 1992:187) but also with an assumed animality of the "Bushmen" (cf. Gordon 1992:2). Implicit is the notion that rather than the "Bushmen" partaking in nature, it is nature that has not as yet completely released its grip on them.⁹ It is fair to say that "San" orientation skills have been "orientalized" in a double sense of the word. In this section I will show that although individual orientation skills are often amazing to the outside observer, they are "natural" to the \neq Akhoa themselves because they are an integral part of a categorization of regions within Hai||om country that is a commonplace in everyday social life.

With regard to innate tracking skills this popular myth is easily falsified. Many "Bushmen" living on the farms and without much exposure to hunting and gathering or indeed any walking in the bush do not claim to be particularly good at reading tracks. They keep to straight roads when travelling and there are cases of children who have lost their way in the bush and have never been found again. It is likely that continual training in the everyday life of a hunter or tracker develops in individuals the skill and experience in these tasks which Europeans find mystifying. Many skilled Hai||om and other "Bushmen" have developed an extraordinary expertise with regard to reading the tracks and other signs that humans and animals leave in the bush. Everybody who has spent some time in the bush soon realizes that this is an extraordinary cultural achievement which is belittled

⁹Gordon also quotes archival sources that show earlier examples of settlers and colonial administrators exploiting the tracking skills of "San" as in the usage of "tame Bushmen" to track down and fight "wild Bushmen" (1992:114; 138).

if attributed to an innate source.

The case is less obvious with regard to spatial orientation in which, outside the context of tracking (Marsh 1993:58) or even hunting (Schoeman 1957[1951]:73), observers have been surprised by the ability of "Bushmen" to locate places and routes which they have never been to before. After the exploitation of "San" by the South African army, the legend of "instinctive" "Bushman" skills has been perpetuated in the field of commercial hunting. In both, army and hunting expeditions it is not only the skill of (back)tracking that is valued but also that of dead reckoning. Dead reckoning is the skill of combining information of known places and directions in order to follow a new course. It includes the skill of constantly updating one's own position and the computation of paths and their direction and of places and their location. A recent contribution in a South African hunter's magazine on the use of a Global Positioning System (GPS) concludes with the following episode:

"They [two "Bushmen"] set off at a right angle to the tracks and before the sun had moved much further I found myself back at the Land Cruiser, and how I cursed myself for doubting the instinctive abilities of those two young Bushmen. Their navigational precision was even better than that of the Magellan NAV 5000. They did not work to a 25 metre error factor." (Marsh 1993:58).

Vexed by such popular accounts and inspired by the work of Lewis (1976) with central Australian Aborigines and Levinson (1992), with coastal Aborigines I set out to test systematically whether there was any basis to these alleged orientation skills, equipped with a GPS (a Sony Pyxis) and accompanied on several occasions by a number of Hai||om men and women who were travelling with me in the Mangetti-West area. On each occasion we set out walking into the bush from a place a considerable distance (15 to 40km) from the home base. The mostly straight vehicle tracks were out of sight and each man and woman was asked in isolation to point to a number of places (ranging in distance from 2 to 150 kilometres) most of which they had never approached from our current position and some of

which they had never been to themselves.¹⁰ The environment in all of these cases was dense bush with a visibility of less than 20 metres and with no salient landmarks in sight. The setup of this experiment-like situation was chosen in order to eliminate the most common visible environmental clues (paths, landmarks) and to force my consultants to rely on their memory of the track behind us and on their skills of dead-reckoning the direction from other places and directions they knew. The results, summarized in table 4.2, lead to a number of conclusions:

- The overall result shows a remarkable degree of accuracy similar to the results gained by other hunter-gatherers in similar tasks (Lewis 1976:257; Levinson 1992:11) and far beyond the skills of Europeans as well as beyond statistical randomness (see Levinson 1992:12). Furthermore, the errors made have a pattern as subjects' pointings are in the majority of cases skewed to the west.

- The abilities of individuals vary. While women are better than men in the orientation tasks (an average of 10.62° error for women and 19.15° for men) younger subjects had better results than older subjects (14.45° for the junior and 17.65° for the senior subjects). Thus, we can conclude that hunting and tracking animals cannot be the decisive element for performing well in these orientation tasks, nor can experience of life in the bush and frequent visiting of places be the only relevant factors.

- The skill of keeping track of one's movements does not seem to depend on exceptional physical abilities in the field of sensory perception. The tests

¹⁰The instructions given were "Show me where x is from here in a straight way (≠*hanu daoba*).\" X being one of the points on a standardized list of places. I made it clear that I was comparing their pointing with what the machine indicated. Since operating the GPS was a time-consuming job, my consultants regarded the exercise primarily as one of testing the GPS through Hai||om orientation skills and not vice versa.

took place at midday or early afternoon and the sky was cloudy or overcast. Hardly any noticeable attention was paid to the position to the sun. Pointing was explicitly oriented to gaps between trees and bushes within sight through which one would have to walk in order to reach the places referred to. Parallel with what Schoeman (1957[1951]:73) noted in passing, there was less hesitation in pointing to distant places than in pointing to the points of sunrise and sunset. Three of the subjects (AS, DD, DK) have impaired eyesight which makes their skill even more remarkable. Genetically or otherwise heightened sensual abilities are unconvincing as an explanation.¹¹

- In order to orient themselves Hai||om can draw on frequent spatial references in everyday communication which they use to construct complex representations. People in some cases said that they "did not know" the direction to places which they considered to be outside their own *!hus* (land). But they did pointed fairly accurately to places which they had not been to themselves, or had only been to when ^{el:il} a₁ if these places were part of their *!hus* and frequently referred to in everyday conversation. In these cases they commented that dead reckoning was possible because they had frequently observed others pointing to these places while talking about them.

¹¹For a more general discussion of the uses and problematic interpretations of experiments carried out with "Bushmen" see Berland (1983) and Reuning (1988). Deregowski and Bentley's study (1988) touches on questions of spatial perception. The authors confirm a "remarkable perceptual constancy" of "Bushman" subjects found in earlier experiments but can only offer "cultural and genetical" distance as an explanation of the results (Deregowski and Bentley 1988:183). The "naturalistic procedures" which they recommend (1988:184) involve objects of everyday life but still highly artificial tasks that do not include any social factors which could render speculation about genetical conditions unnecessary.

Subject	N	average deviation	skewed to east	skewed to west	not known
HO, young man	21	12.24°	10	9	1
AK, eld. man	21	10.7°	5	15	0
HU, y. woman	20	12.35°	9	8	3
MK, y. man	20	10.85°	8	4	7
GK, e. woman	20	10.95°	9	9	2
AS, e. woman	20	8.55°	4	14	2
DD, e. man	19	31.63°	1	17	1
AB, e. man	20	27.7°	0	20	0
DK, e. man	13	18.15°	5	7	0
AR, boy	12	28.67°	2	10	0
Total	186	16.40°	53	113	16

Table 4.2 Hai||om estimates of direction

In sum, these results do not support the notion that Hai||om knowledge relating to spatial orientation is innate or perfect. Out of all 186 bearings given only four were precise, i.e. neither skewed to the east or to the west. Furthermore, we need to recall that these experiment-like situations only test for a very narrow section of orientation skills. For the practical spatial task of getting somewhere, exact pointing would not suffice. Given the large

range of possible investigator's errors¹² we are not comparing "Bushmen" with an "objective" GPS. Rather, we are comparing Hai||om responses to the non-everyday requests of pointing exactly with the investigator's skill at using a GPS. In this case I, as the investigator, had little more to rely on than limited experience with this machine and with a not very explicit operating manual at hand. My Hai||om consultants, by contrast, had had long experience of moving between places and communicating about locations and directions with fellow Hai||om. This suggests that we need more information about the ways in which social and, in particular, communicative aspects influence orientation skills. The following case situations give an idea of how spatial information is communicated in everyday interaction.

Case situation 7

At |Gomais people discuss good (medicine) dance performances they have witnessed and were told about. The main topic of discussion is whether it is good to eat and drink before starting a dance. One place that is repeatedly mentioned is a farm called "Brakkies" not far from Tsumeb. When somebody asks where exactly Brakkies is, several people start explaining. Many descriptions use demonstratives ("go like this", "that way") that go with continual pointing gestures. Other descriptions use directionals:

¹²There are a number of possible investigator's errors which have to be taken into account. The so-called parallax error occurs when the reading takes place with a compass held by the investigator and not by the subject who is asked to keep the pointing arm outstretched. See Levinson (1992:11) for a further discussion of possible errors and of possible statistical evaluations. Furthermore, most GPS bearings relied on positional data derived from existing maps. The South West Africa 1:250000 topographical maps (sheets 1816 and 1716) and the 1:50000 maps (1817DA and 1817DB) which I used are based on aerial photographs but only allow an approximate mapping of Hai||om places since they show a largely featureless and nameless bush landscape. Moreover, the Sony Pyxis manual does not list the geodetic system for Namibia. I selected ARC 1950 which is valid for South Africa and Botswana. The GPS was set on "automatic magnetic bearing" so that it should correspond to compass readings. Since north-south cutlines that according to map extended from 0° to 180° were according to GPS extending from 12° to 192° the GPS reading corresponded roughly though not exactly to the current magnetical variation of 11.3°.

"*Tsumeb di daoba tsa ra u, os ge Brakkies ge a sore+oasa/oa.*" (You take the road to Tsumeb and then it is to the east.) (Fieldnotes 16, 23.2.94)

Case situation 8

In a conversation about the behaviour of some wild animals, Xareb tells the story of his first encounter with a lion when he was a young man. He is sitting on the ground facing south when he describes how he was walking to the east on that day using the directional | *gamba/oa* and pointing to the east. He then enacts how he first heard strange noises made by the lion coming up behind him by turning his head and pointing behind him (to the north). Hence he sets the cardinal directions of the original event for the narration but he then ignores them (or takes them for granted) and creates a narrative space putting himself and the listeners in the situation of the event. (Fieldnotes 16, 23.2.94)

Case situation 9

We are driving on a straight road towards the west where the sun has just set. Haiseb, sitting next to me, tells me about how they travelled on the road that goes straight north from | Gomais to Sanab (he moves his arm away from his body). There the local Owambo has locked the water pump and moved away temporarily leaving the local +Akhoe without water. I ask where the Owambo moved to and he replies "*Ne | khabī.*" (this side) moving his arm straight in front and his hand to the left (south). I ask: "To +Giseb?" but he replies: "*ī-ī, +Giseb ge a sore+oas | khabī. Ne !asai, Botosai.*" (No, +Giseb is in the east. To that place Botos [he moved].). While talking he again stretches out his arm with his hand first pointing to the right (to indicate +Giseb) and then repeats his initial pointing to the left (to indicate Botos). It takes me a while to realize that his pointing referred to his long walk on the road to Sanab (straight north) where one has the choice of going left/west to Botos or right/east to +Giseb. He used the terms for cardinal directions but he was ignoring the cardinal directions of our actual movement. He took it for granted that I had followed along his narration in which pointing was an important part. (Fieldnotes 18, 25.2.94)

As the case situations indicate, spatial reference is an important part of Hai||om communication. Pointing to cardinal directions is an important part of this communication which, however, has to be analyzed in combination with linguistic strategies. There are a number of verbal and paralinguistic means to refer to directions and to movements in a way that relative directions (as in case 3) are embedded or "anchored" in cardinal ones. New points of departure are created for descriptions using "narrative

space" (see Haviland 1992). The pattern of individual variability in the pointing tasks and the ubiquity of pointing and "topographical gossip" (Lewis 1976:274) in Hai||om communication suggest that orientation skills are constituted through prolonged social interaction and vary accordingly. In order to demonstrate this an ethnography of developmental processes and acquisition studies would be required. With the limited data available it is still reasonable to hypothesize that Hai||om orientation relies critically on individual exposure to discourse involving spatial references which in turn relies on specific institutionalized ways of marking places and paths as socially salient. This hypothesis may lead to a practice-oriented explanation of the relative precision in the pointing tasks and of the fact that the skill was widely but not equally distributed among individuals. As I want to show below, it is not only a high frequency of spatial language in conversation but more fundamentally a set of institutionalized social practices that give substance and force to spatial reference in the communication process.

As with other southern African hunter-gatherer groups, Hai||om theories about the land, its resources, and the people living off this land are not presented to the investigator as an explicit and systematic cosmological system. Unlike the case of Australian Aborigines, there is no body of codified knowledge expressed and transmitted in ritual and myth that is highly localized. There is no group of initiated men who safeguard a body of knowledge relating to sacred objects and places.¹³ Rather Hai||om perception of and experience in their environment has to be elicited from a whole range of context-dependent practices. Socially shared ways of thinking about the environment are particularly salient in naming, classifying and categorizing practices. On the most basic level this includes the language of

¹³The work that has been done with Aboriginal Australians (Lewis 1976, Levinson 1992, Haviland 1992, Nash 1993, Wilkins pers. com.) makes clear that Aborigines in general also rely on a range of context-dependent practices such as naming, classifying and categorizing to guide their experience of the environment since not everybody has equal access to the systematic cosmological system which, like maps in the European tradition, present context-independent geographical information.

spatial orientation and movement in space.

In an attempt to collect language about space systematically I conducted a number of "elicitation tasks" that were developed to produce as much "natural" conversation about spatial relations as possible.¹⁴ For the Hai||om case they show that Hai||om spatial reference includes speaker- or person-centred descriptors (e.g. *sa am | khab*, your right), object-centred descriptors (e.g. *kairib di ||are | khab*, to the pig's left) as well as ground-centred cardinal descriptors such as *sore+gâs* (west, lit. "sun goes in") and *| gamb* or *sore+oas* (east, lit. "warmth" and "sun comes out"). As for north and south, +Akhoe Hai||om talk about going *||goeiba!oa* (to the *||Goeaib*, lit. place of the *||goa* fruit) when turning north from *| Gomais* and *!aaiba!oa* (to the *!Aaib*, lit. the place of the river) when turning south. When located in the *!Aaib* for instance, turning south becomes *gogara!oa* (to the *Gogara*, lit. the place of the hard ground). These terms are not only used when walking towards the south or north but also when facing one of these directions or when being placed towards either of these two directions. Absolute terms are used not only in the macro setting of people, animals or cars moving in the world but also on a micro level when describing the

¹⁴For the systematic elicitation and investigation of spatial language and spatial cognition a series of tasks was run with Hai||om speakers. The "stimuli kits" developed for this purpose are part of a larger cross-cultural research project on space in language and cognition. Between May 1992 and throughout 1993 and 1994 I was able to participate in the development of these tasks in the Cognitive Anthropology Research Group at Nijmegen. The elicitation games are played by two players (speakers) seated side by side with a screen separating them. Each of the players has an identical set of pictures. The screen between the players prevents them not only from seeing each other's pictures but also prevents communication by gestures. One of them, the Director, chooses the pictures one by one and describes them to the other player, the Matcher. On the basis of this description, the Matcher has to select from his or her pictures the one which matches the Director's picture. The Director and the Matcher can talk as much as they want. The Men and Tree Photo Game consist of pictures that differ from each other in terms of the spatial arrangement of the objects (toy men and toy trees) on the photos. The tasks and some of the cross-linguistic results are described in detail in reports of the Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics (1992, 1993).

position of objects to each other as in the elicitation games.

The Hai||om language does provide the possibility of spatial description in person-centred terms and the possibility of thinking about space in these terms but the tendency to rely on object-centred and above all on ground-centred terms is very clear in comparison with subjects of other groups who were asked to do the same task. This is not only true for a comparison with European languages but also with Bantu-languages spoken in the same area as Hai||om.

No systematic investigation of this sort has been done with Owambo speakers or any of the other immediate neighbours of the Hai||om but a comparison with Bantu-speaking Kgalagadi people in Botswana may give an indication of how different languages seem to organize communication about space and possibly also the perception of the environment more generally. The Kgalagadi with whom Sabine Neumann has worked in Hukuntsi (Botswana) are today sedentary pastoralists. Hunting and gathering have been important factors in the traditional Kgalagadi economy. Politically and economically Kgalagadi have lived closely together with "Bushmen" in Botswana, often in a master-serf relation (see Silberbauer and Kuper 1966). Given all this, it is all the more surprising that there are considerable differences between the results of the Hai||om and the Kgalagadi sample in the elicitation tasks. The frequency of descriptors used by speakers of both groups in their dialogues when solving the Man and Tree elicitation task may serve as an indicator for differences in communicating spatial relations (see Widlok and Neumann 1994 for more details). It shows a preference in Hai||om descriptions for ground-centred (i.e. landscape terms and cardinals) and object-centred (e.g. "at the front of") phrases, while the Kgalagadi data shows a preference for speaker-centred propositions (e.g. "to my left").¹⁵

¹⁵In detail the results for Hai||om (versus Kgalagadi) speakers are as follows: ground-centred 48% (24%), person-centred 11% (43%), object-centred 41% (33%) of all utterances (n = 46 [63]). These results have parallels in non-linguistic cognitive tasks that were designed to investigate whether people used "absolute" (ground-centred) or "relative" (person-centred) strategies in memory and inference tasks (see Widlok and Neumann

A large number of spatial descriptors used by Hai||om are landmark, or more precisely, landscape terms. When referring to spatial arrangements, Hai||om in most contexts refer to stretches of land by pointing and by naming features in the landscape that are absolute in their orientation from the position of both speaker and listener. Expressions which orient locations on an east-west axis are mostly cardinal terms but also places or ad hoc landmarks (a car, a seated person, a particular hut or tree, a village or farm). The expressions orienting locations on a north-south axis which are chosen by most Hai||om speakers refer to the *!hus* (the land of the "band cluster", see below) that is to be found in the designated direction. These landscape (rather than landmark) features are, of course, contingent on the location where the conversation takes place.¹⁶ Hence the *!hus* categories are much more frequent in everyday conversation than cardinal terms are in, say, English or German, and they refer more directly to a specific landscape, its people and its resources.

When mapped onto the conventional terms used in the analysis of group structure among foragers these terms come closest to representing names of a band cluster since they (can) comprise a number of local groups or bands. In Hai||om usage they are sometimes referred to as *||gâub*, the grammatically male form of *||gâus*, the term used for a local hearth group or band (see chapter six). More often, however, these groupings are referred to as groups that belong to a land (*!hus*). As the following list shows, they classify a piece of land as much as a group of people associated with that land:

1994). While European (Dutch) subjects select almost exclusively "relative" solutions, Hai||om subjects show a clear tendency towards "absolute" solutions and Kgalagadi speakers respond with mixed strategies (with a slight tendency towards "relative" solutions).

¹⁶Like ad hoc landmarks the landscape provides an absolute frame with regard to speaker and listener in a specific context. In so far as speakers can potentially change their position towards them or, as in case 2, temporarily suspend the cardinal anchoring, a landscape descriptor is, of course, relative across speech events.

- a) || *Goe-ai-khoe*, lit. || *goe* (fruit) place people ("The people of the fine sand where the *!no* fruit grows".)
- b) *Tsabo-khoe*, lit. soft sand people (south of || *Goe-aib*)
- c) | *Gom-ai-khoe*, lit. mangetti place people (north of the Omuramba Owambo)
- d) *!A-ai-khoe*, lit. river place people (Omuramba Owambo, a mostly dry river stretching in an east-west direction)
- e) *Se-khoe*, lit. plains people (flat land south of the Omuramba Owambo)
- f) *Gogara-khoe*, lit. stony ground people (between Omuramba Owambo and Tsumeb)
- g) | *Khoma-khoe*, lit. hill people (Otavi mountains, south of Tsumeb)
- h) *Xom-khoe*, lit. *xom* (sound) people (around Etosha pan "where the ground sounds like "*xomxom*" when walking on it")¹⁷
- i) *Sâu-khoe*, lit. millet people (near the Ndonga tribal centre)

The fact that early ethnographers have already noted most of these names (Fourie 1927:50; Unterkötter n.d.:7) is a first indication for the lasting importance of these regional subdivisions. In all cases groups are distinguished on the grounds of the physical conditions of the land they inhabit, i.e. either the surface structure or a resource that is typical for this stretch of land.

This is maintained as a principle throughout even with regard to differences between my list and that of the early ethnographers. Unterkötter (n.d.), writing in the 1930s, lists equivalents to groups c, d, f, and h adding two further names ("Unikhoin" and "Oudibkhoin", his spelling) which also refer to physical features of the land, *!uni* palm trees in the first case and a vley (marsh) in the second case.

Fourie's list (1927:50) includes almost all the groups on my list except groups a, d and i. Taking Fourie and Unterkötter together this leaves

¹⁷Fourie (1927:50) was offered another but related etymology according to which *xom* means "scrape together [...] indicating the method of collecting salt on the pan". Krönlein/Rust (Rust 1969:46) translate *xom* as "dusting off" and "brushing off" ("abstauben", "abbürsten").

only the *||Goeaikhoe* and *Sâukhoe* (groups a and i on my list) previously unmentioned. This is not surprising given that these are the most northerly of all the groups, occupying the area north of the Omuramba Owambo, about whom in Fourie's time "very little [was] known" (1927:50). Fourie lists two further groups, namely "≠Goa-khoin" (people around a place called ≠Goab [clay]) and "Gei-≠gas-khoin" (lit. great open space people, north of Etosha) and indicates that there are even more terms.

There are several complementary explanations for these differences. One is that Fourie's and Unterkötter's information was collected further to the south-west of my fieldwork location. Some of the local groups he mentions might therefore not be known in the ≠Akhoe Hai ||om area because of distance. Furthermore, the names of some groups may no longer be in circulation because Hai ||om who now form part of Owambo groups or are town or farm dwellers do not maintain an identity corresponding to this level of division. In the commercial farming districts investigating these names is a reconstruction because there is a tendency among Hai ||om who have lived on farms for generations, as is the case in the west (formerly Otavi district) and the south (formerly Otjiwarongo district), not to differentiate themselves but to identify as "just Hai ||om" or apparently not to bother much about ethnic differences.

What seems to require more explanation is the fact that over this comparatively long period of change, the delimitations and labels of these groupings have remained largely the same. This contrasts with the naming of places which in some cases has led to places having several names (see chapter six) and to places changing names within a relatively short period.¹⁸ An important factor in the naming of areas or landscapes seems to be the fact that these designators of a ||gâub or band cluster do not

¹⁸For example, in one case the recently immigrated Owambo residents called the place Daidams which, according to its form and to the statement of the Owambo farmers, is an adaptation of the "San" name. After the farm was established a group of Hai ||om moved to Daidams working for the local Owambo. They referred to the place not as Daidams but as ||As.

correspond to a single settlement and a corporate group and are therefore to some degree independent of shifts in demography and political alliances. The *!hus* terms (and by consequence also the directional terms) rely on a more lasting form of institutionalization, one based on everyday social practice. The classification of the natural and social environment into landscapes forms the background for other classifications such as that of *soxa* (see above) and is invoked by them. The first fruits should be tasted by a senior person of the *!hus* (or *||gâub*) in question not by the oldest person who happens to live at the place at present. Even Hai||om who expressed scepticism about the *soxa* properties of mangetti in their everyday practice of *xore* (daily gathering) or of *!haro* (gathering trips of several days) preferred areas that they regarded as theirs or as close to their own. In |Gomais this is so in spite of the fact that all but a few adults and most of the children under ten years old were not born at |Gomais but came to stay in this area as a result of displacement during the war. They tend to use the cattleposts and mangetti groves that belong to that part of the Mangetti-West farms that is closest to their point of origin. Everyday gathering behaviour correlates with the social boundaries which are drawn with regard to land. When asked to name these groups, that is, to subdivide the Hai||om into regional subgroups, the *!hus* terms are used.

All but two groups (the *Xomkhoe* in the extreme west and the *Sâukhoe* in the extreme north-west) can be shown on a north-south map of the Hai||om area given the shape of the area currently occupied by Hai||om (see figure 2.3).

These land-cum-people designators are not only relevant to the tasting of the *soxa* first fruits of a particular place. More fundamentally they refer to the (traditionally) exogamous group which in anthropological terms may be called a "band cluster" or *||gâub* (see chapter six). Among the Hai||om I worked with, these terms serve for identification with regard to a piece of land. In all the discussions I participated in that dealt with the question of land legislation, claims to land, and a sense of belonging, this was the group that was invoked. When talking about *sida !hus* (our land),

people usually referred to the areas that were covered by one of the terms listed above. There is a tendency, though, for the younger people who have been displaced from the land of their parents to refer to the names of specific places rather than areas (parallel with what has been observed among Australian Aborigines who would identify with their "mob" cf. Tonkinson 1974). But even in large compound settlements such as | Gomatis, people continue to identify each other as members of three different groups: ||Goeaikhoe, Tsabokhoe, and | Gomkhoe joined with |Khomakhoe and !Aaikhoe. Since these groups stayed relatively separate even in the small space available at the main settlement at | Gomatis, they were even attributed another name with regard to the place they occupied there. The three names (| aba!anis = red mound | highland, ≠nu!hoas = black depression/lowland, !uri!hums = white hill)⁶ are yet again based on physical features of the land, this time very local in scope. Since the whole place is rather small, flat and without remarkable differences in altitude or the colour of the ground, it is difficult for a casual visitor to reconstruct the geographical grounding that is used here. Rather, it seems that the principle of naming a group in accordance with physical features of the land it lives on was applied on this micro-scale even though the topographical conditions did not really support it very well. The terms are not used very often, mostly on occasions when people aim to point out troublemakers who bring the whole camp into disrepute with the managers, the police or visiting officials. It becomes most apparent on these occasions of conflict and fighting that the compound camp falls into three parts. But, as will be shown in chapter seven, the division also plays a role with regard to medicine dance performances. And, as I have shown in the previous chapter, residence plays an important role in the definition of the limits of sharing.

In contrast to the three areas within | Gomatis, the geographical features invoked in the terms for Hai||om subdivisions listed above are very

⁶Cf. Kroenlein and Rust for further meanings and usages of !anis, !hoas and !homs [sic] (Rust 1969).

distinctive and easily recognizable even to the outsider. Even for a socially and locally disoriented Hai||om it would be impossible not to realize when he or she was entering another *!hus*. It is easily recognizable by the type of ground or at least by the type of plants that grow on this ground. The orientation provided is not simply geographical. What it also invokes are the boundaries that ideally separate the three modes of transaction. It is the Hai||om who are coresident in a *!hus* who share (\neq *hûigu*) the resources of this land on a day to day basis. And it is the Hai||om of a neighbouring *!hus* with whom one has exchange (*magu*) relations on the occasion of mutual visits throughout the year. Each *!hus* connotes a characteristic set of natural resources. At the same time the *!hus* boundaries connote a regular exchange involving those products which one does not have in one's own *!hus*. Finally *||amagu*, the barter mode of transaction, takes place between Hai||om and those who are considered outsiders (*|naben* [Owambo] and *|hun* [white bosses]). These outsiders visit Hai||om country on an irregular basis to pursue their own goals but incorporate Hai||om and give them the opportunity to gain access to resources which are traditionally not found in any part of Hai||om country (millet, maize, iron, guns etc). The modes of transactions are thereby institutionalized in that the three terminologically distinct modes are grounded in a wider set of classifications relating to land and its resources. They become particularly powerful because the association is not an explicit or dogmatic one but an implicit link between spheres of exchange (internal, regional, external) and apparently natural categories.

From a Hai||om speaker/social actor's point of view there is an inevitable link between the country of the soft sand, the relation they have with the people living in that stretch of land, and the abundance of the sweet *!no* fruit. Natural features such as the (mostly dry) river bed of the Omuramba Owambo are by definition linked to the occurrence of the plant from which they gain the poison for hunting arrows, an important trade item. The proximity to white farmers (in the *!Aaib*) as a source for different types of work and income is also connoted and so is (in the *Tsabo!hus*) the effort involved in walking through soft sand with few water sources, or (in the

Gogarab) of crossing stretches of hard ground with sufficient water but little wild fruit and with the potential threat of being expelled by the white farm owner. Indeed one could argue that the directional aspect of the directional terms is secondary since, by and large, they are not very precise but allow for great tolerance with regard to the exact direction, but they are fairly definitive with regard to their natural and social properties. Hence each of the two terms ||*Goaib* and !*Aaib*, the root terms mostly used to designate "north" and "south" respectively in | Gomais, inherently stands for a cardinal direction, a group of people, and a natural area. One important feature that I have not yet mentioned is that these terms are flexible and replaceable. For instance, these days the Owambo agro-pastoralists are increasingly settling in Hai||om country which has resulted in a stretch of land between the *Tsabokhoe* and | *Gomkhoe* that is being settled exclusively by Owambo. As a consequence, Hai||om living in the *Tsabokhoe* area now give the term " | *naben!hus*" (land of the Owambo) when asked to name the area to their south. Similarly, as central places and small towns gain importance for the Hai||om as service centres (stores, drought relief food distribution, old age pensions, hospitals) they are often used as directionals (*Kongob!oa* for "to the north", *Tsumeb!oa* for "to the south"). Finally, especially among Hai||om who were displaced to the south of their original dwelling places during the war, I have often encountered informants who were unable to name the southerly cardinal direction since they were unacquainted with the land further to the south and did not know which natural or social features they could relate to.

In sum, it appears that excellent orientation skills and the tendency to use absolute (landscape) terms in spatial language are only side effects of a more fundamental social process, namely the institutionalization of social groupings that are of crucial importance in social relationships. These social relationships involve gaining access to resources, organizing the entitlements to and transaction of these resources as well as marriage relations. The material demonstrated so far confirms the proposition that most elementary cognitive processes do play a role in the founding of institutions as the

"natural" and "reasonable" basis of social organization and at the same time depend on complex social motivations and conventions (see Douglas 1987[1986]:45). But a closer look at the social classifications involved also shows that this is not a status fixed once and for all but that we are dealing with a dynamic process. The most important single result of the pointing experiment summarized above is that the writer in the hunter's magazine misjudged the skills of the "Bushman" not quantitatively but qualitatively. "San" orientation skills are not superior to a mobile Global Positioning System because of a smaller error factor. Rather, unlike the GPS, "San" orientation skills go beyond the narrow confines of abstract tasks. They have the advantage of accumulating relevant data from a wide range of linguistic and non-linguistic interaction over a lifetime and across individuals. Moreover, their practical skills, including their classification of landscapes, allow them to combine information of such diverse fields as topography, botany, the history of intergroup relations, modes of exchange, and directions of movements. These are fundamental cognitive skills which, however, are not detected by standard cognitive science methodology.

It is not only the association between "traditional" land and its resources that exhibits the relation between cognitive processes of classification and social processes of group formation and resource transactions. As already indicated at the beginning of this chapter, the classification of food also continues to play an important role in attempts to deal with differential access to introduced resources that do not fall within the scope of *soxa* or the Hai||om land-cum-resource-cum-people categories. The category of *Sâukhoe* mentioned earlier is an example of this dynamic aspect of the classification of a stretch of land and its people.

Conclusion

Food classification has been shown to be socially motivated since it helps to identify positions in a mixed economy. The "sharing environment" is part and parcel of this classification process as it stands for direct access as opposed to the extended access in the case of "the planted gardens" and "the shop". It is the food obtained from the bush which is subject to a more elaborate classification, that of *soxa* (taboo) objects and non-*soxa* objects. Without being formally encoded or enforced, the notion of *soxa* is a good example of an informally instituted pattern of behaviour that relies on authoritative shared knowledge rather than on authoritarian leadership (see Silberbauer 1987[1982]:29). The notion of *soxa* is represented as an inherent quality of an object but at the same time it is clearly recognized as a relational quality in that things and actions are only *soxa* with regard to a particular set of people at a particular point in time. This apparent ambivalence is explained by placing *soxa* in the context of a more fundamental classification of space. An investigation into the parameters of Hai||om orientation skills shows that these rely on a widely used and widely shared set of directional terms based on a system of landscape terms. The classification of land (*!hus*) has a large share in Hai||om communication because it brings together topographical knowledge, group identity, the distribution of important resources, and spheres of transaction. Furthermore the informally institutionalized and naturalized classification of land, resources, and people also enables Hai||om to define relations with neighbouring agropastoralists.



Plate 4.1 Domokhoeb being consulted about pointing out directions to particular places.



Plate 4.2 !Gamekhas discussing one of the "orientation tasks" with the anthropologist.

Chapter Five

Language Pragmatics and Communicated Values

Introduction

In the preceding chapters the negotiated character of Hai||om social institutions has repeatedly come to the fore. Given the way in which Hai||om social organization is structured, the rather ephemeral modes of social interaction have been the main object of my description. One field in which patterns of social interaction "materialize" is in conventionalized forms of language usage which are the focus of this chapter. Ever since Lorna Marshall's (1961) paper, researchers have reported on the social relevance of "talking" as a complement to exchange and sharing in the everyday experience of "San".¹ Hai||om language usage is no exception in that gossip, disputes, rumour and indirect discourse, indirect oral requests, "loud thinking", naming as well as calling each other names are everyday tools of social manoeuvre which account for much of the informal character of Hai||om social organization. This chapter cannot deal exhaustively with the Hai||om language and its pragmatic functions. As such, this linguistic description is unavoidably a fragmentary account focusing on Hai||om "symbolic language usages" which are, in Tyler's sense, pieces of communication in which "speakers and hearers do not resolutely seek clarity, consensus and agreement in harmonious communication, but exploit ambiguities" (Tyler 1988:vii). Symbolic language usage in this sense is particularly interesting in the context of social relations because it reveals

¹For instance, Wiessner has pointed to the importance of talk and conversation in the context of *hxaro* and other forms of exchange. She reports that about 60 percent of topics covered in conversations were discussions of "who had what and did or did not give it to whom" (Wiessner 1987[1982]:68).

elements of shared knowledge to which speakers allude, which is implied in their talk, and it exhibits socially conventionalized modes of linguistically constructed social relationships. The usage of symbolic language such as implicatures in turn involves negotiation which depends on pre-existing social relations. Three diverse examples will be discussed in this chapter: "ritualized" language, the Hai||om expressions of indirect requests and of uncertainty, and Hai||om greetings.

Language in Ritual Contexts

As a variant of Khoekhoe, Hai||om is largely mutually intelligible with Damara and Nama. My research is based on extended field work in the most northerly Hai||om-speaking communities where distance to speakers of standard Nama/Damara is at its maximum both geographically as well as in terms of language variation within the Khoekhoe language. This distance has led some Khoisanists to favour the distinctive name "ǀAkhoe" to designate the language and the ethnic identity of these people (Heikkinen n.d.[a]) while others regard it as part of the Hai||om variant of Khoekhoe (Eiseb, pers. com.). Compared with Nama/Damara and Ju|'hoan the linguistic information on ǀAkhoe Hai||om is scarce. Apart from the early work of Stopa (1936, 1938, 1947, 1963), which contains some empirical material, and translations of Bible texts, the only linguistic sources are Heikkinen's still unpublished wordlist (Heikkinen n.d.[c]), an unpublished sketch of the grammar (Heikkinen n.d.[b]) and an unpublished collection of folk stories (Heikkinen n.d.[a]).

The distinction between ǀAkhoe and Hai||om, which I have used in previous chapters to distinguish Hai||om from north of the Omuramba Owambo (by their autonym ǀAkhoe) from all other Hai||om, is particularly pertinent in this chapter. Although the language of the ǀAkhoe both in structure and in vocabulary has more elements of !Xô than Hai||om has, neither ǀAkhoe nor Hai||om is mutually understandable with !Xô (!Kung).

But since ≠Akhoe have often lived with !Xû speakers for some time or are even of mixed descent themselves, many are bilingual in these two languages.²

The language used in the songs of the medicine dance ritual (see chapter eight) are said to be !Xû, but apparently not of the kind usually heard since even bilingual Hai||om have difficulties in understanding the words.

One of the other few occasions on which formalized language is used, or was used until recently, is when lighting the first fire in a new camp, a privilege of the old men as Fourie (1966[1928]:87) has already noted.

Case situation 1

When I asked male elders at |Gomais to show me how they lit the *!hai |ais* (the principal and first fire when establishing a camp) with firedrill in the old days, I was given a demonstration which included the following sequence:

"Ja, nari; ja, nari an ta aisa am;	"So then, light; so then, light so that I [can] roast on the fire;
nari nau di aisa; !arib di ais;	light, fire of the duiker; fire of the steenbok;
xaib di ais."	fire of the kudu."

Case situation 2

And, another time, the same informants gave the following words which they said should accompany the lighting of the fire:

" Nari, an ta sâ; ani ta aiba û-ha; aisa ao nari ani khau;	"Light, so that I rest; so that I will have fire; fire, light so that it burns;
--	--

²The !Xû variants spoken in the Mpungu and Okongo areas are again different from the Ju|'hoan variants spoken in the Nyae Nyae and Dobe areas (see linguistic descriptions by Heikkinen 1986, 1987, Snyman 1975, 1991).

an ta | nausa kave;
!ariba kave;
an ta ≠û."

and that I will find a duiker;
find a steenbok;
so that I eat."

These words are uttered at intervals as the hands vigorously turn the firedrill moving from top to bottom end, then starting again at the top. The hearth, which is notched to accommodate the firedrill, is covered with some dry grass and either kept in place with one's feet or held by another man if present. The drilling itself may also be done in turns to ensure continual movement of the drill. What Malinowski said about "technical language" in other contexts seems to apply here, namely that "each utterance is essentially bound up with the context of situation and with the aim of the pursuit" (Malinowski 1936[1923]:311 but see also Tambiah 1986:185-86). But the "purposeful activity" with the "definite aim" (Malinowski 1936[1923]:310) of lighting a fire has another implicit meaning which is not contained in the action but which emerges after further questioning. The words, I was told, are uttered in order to ask God (*!Khub*) to send animals and to provide hunting luck.³ To the Hai||om this meaning is conveyed by the context understood in its broader form as "context of situation" (cf. Malinowski 1936[1923]:306).

It is the male elders who say the words, those who have the right to the first and best pieces of the hunted animals. The *!hai | ais* is not only the fire from which all other fires of the camp used to lit, but it still is the fire that is used for the cooking of game meat. It is in this conventional situative setting that the utterances are "inextricably mixed up with, and dependent upon" (Malinowski 1936[1923]:311). If, however, meaning depends on "personal participation in this type of pursuit", when it "has to be learned, not through reflection but through action" (Malinowski 1936[1923]:312), it

³Vedder describes a similar practice with regard to the kindling of the first fire of a gathering season including a "prayer", apparently rephrased in his (missionary) words (cf. Vedder 1932:62, but see also Rohlwink 1980:21).

is not surprising that the younger men do not grasp the meaning. When it comes to translating the words, younger men I questioned took $\parallel nari$ (to light, make fire, twist fire-sticks) to be the same as the more common Hai $\parallel om$ word $\parallel nare$ (to look) and they did not understand the words in the context of hunting luck.⁴ By contrast, for the elderly men, who have lit the fire in this fashion many times, the meaning and addressee of the words are clear without being explicitly mentioned. The implicature entailed in "lighting the fire of the kudu" in the context of the everyday activity "hunting kudu" is that of "asking for hunting luck".

For a hunter to enhance his chances of killing an animal, no offerings are made nor is a divine being or the animal itself directly addressed in a prayer or through a "spell". Instead, "hunting magic" ($\nparallel norab$) takes the form of enhancing one's own performance by obtaining hunting luck. A common strategy to receive hunting luck is the application of tattoos between the eyes (to enhance sight, to make the hunter discover game) or on the arms (to make the arms strong to hold the bow with which game is hunted). Tattooing and other acts that try to capture $\nparallel norab$ (hunter's luck) may or may not be accompanied by words. Another common technique of obtaining $\nparallel norab$ is to take a product of the animal one hopes to find (blood, fat, body parts) and to rub it on one's body.

In none of these cases is an attempt made to replenish the game or to have game "released" by offering gifts. Rather, the hunters are quite explicit about their view according to which the game is out there in the bush but that they seek to enhance their ability to see it and to be able to capture what is unconditionally but also unaffectedly there anyway. The Hai $\parallel om$ are aware of the profane reasons for the depletion of game (see chapter two). In accordance with the overall view of their environment, no

⁴ $\parallel Nari$ is listed in the Bleek dictionary as a $!Xû$ word for "making fire by twisting one stick in another" (Bleek 1956:615). Since the words of the medicine dance are also $!Xû$ this may be another case of ritual language being imported from $!Xû$ sources. Etymologically, therefore, $\parallel nare$ (to look) and $\parallel nari$ (to light) may not be related.

attempt is made to increase the game population (ritually or otherwise). However, acts to enhance one's hunting luck are said to be still carried out. The only case which I have observed myself was during one night when the men were waiting for ants to swarm. This \neq *norab* technique does not make use of ritual language but shows parallels between linguistic and non-linguistic pragmatics.

Case situation 3

After a handful of *anite* (flying ants) had left the anthill and had been attracted by the fire torches into a pre-prepared hole, the eldest man present took one of the winged ants and rubbed it on his forehead between his eyes to attract more *anite* (as he explained the next day).⁵ (Fieldnotes P79, 12.12.91)

Flying ants are only collected during a few days of the year at the beginning of the rainy season and around Christmas (the beginning of the main rainy season) when they swarm. At dusk or during the night a fire is lit at the foot of a hill to attract and gather the swarming insects. It is not easy to pick the right day and several unsuccessful attempts may be involved. "Luck" is therefore an essential part of the enterprise. Again, it is the old men who try to enhance it. And again, it is the situative context which makes their action meaningful.

There are also cases of ritual language usage which are not directly linked to hunting and gathering but instead to the keeping of livestock. Since there is no indication of cultural diffusion and no reported parallels I think it is reasonable to assume that the following small ritual practice is a Hai||om creation.

⁵The exploitation of anthills is one of the few examples where a seasonal individual ownership of resources is recognized. It was pointed out to me that people should only use "their hills". However, if successful, large quantities are gathered within a short time, and the yield is widely shared (cf. Stopa [1936:5] who quotes the word \neq *hûigu*, to share, in this context).

Case situation 4

At Omboto a toddler hit a young chicken hard with a stick. He is not punished for this but two young men close by investigate the chicken. They then take two small sticks each and while rhythmically beating the sticks sing several times: "*!Ga tsum !ga, ûi tsum ûi*"⁶. This was glossed for me later as "Live or die!" but also as "We make [you] get up, we make [you] alive!". (Fieldnotes R17, 16.1.92).

The language applied in all these ritual contexts is not highly formalized but follows the more general pattern of everyday interaction. With regard to the fire lighting example, a similar structure can be heard daily in the form of "give me this, so that I can eat/drink". There are many conventionalized forms for asking for things, which, however, do not rely on the individual adhering to a ritual form or a fixed sequence of utterances. Rather, the room for manoeuvre is considerable and utterances are not necessarily straightforwardly utilitarian in intention, as Malinowski (1936[1923]:329) seems to suggest but cover a wide spectrum of reflexive and action-oriented utterances. It is also not necessarily utilitarian in outcome but it is inherently a cooperative exercise which depends on the interlocutors to fill in the implicature that is being made. While "magic language usage" is widely discussed in the anthropological literature (cf. Tambiah 1968), it is much less pervasive in Hai||om everyday life than other forms of symbolic language usage such as indirect discourse, especially indirect demands.

⁶*Tsum* is the 1. Pers. Dual pronoun, *ûi* means "to be alive/to live", and *!ga* has a number of meanings including "recover/arise". In Khoekhoe reduplication of verbs expresses the causative so that *ûiûi* is "to make alive" or "to revive". However, in everyday language there are no pronouns inserted between the two elements of a reduplication. To elicit the exact meaning of these words proved to be difficult although the "saying" and its usage was known by many ≠Akhoe. (I have only seen this practice being performed once.)

Indirect Requests in Hai||om

The ≠Akhoe have many ways of asking for things, directly and indirectly, and of expressing their powerlessness, wants, and needs. The manifestation of the "desiderative" mode of expression in Hai||om, which I will discuss below, stands out in its ubiquity.

The phrase discussed here centres on *goma*, a lexical item which in standard Nama/Damara as well as in Hai||om or ≠Akhoe is used to make a statement indirect. In this function it has been categorized as a "simple adverb" or, more precisely, as an "evidential adverb" (Hagman 1977:54, 101). Rust (1969:110) defines *goma*⁷ as "an interjection, often non-translatable particle that is inserted into the sentence to mark this sentence as an uncertain statement or as a request or message conveyed in the name of someone else". He then gives the following five examples (three of his own, the last two taken from Krönlein's earlier wordlist):

- (1) "Gao-aob ge goma go ||o:
der König sei gestorben, soll gestorben sein;"
The King is said to have died.
- (2) "||ari du ge goma nîra be:
morgen solltet ihr weggehen (so heißt es);"
Tomorrow you are leaving (so they say).
- (3) "!haibe go ge goma nî si:
ihr solltet schnell hinkommen (so soll ich es ausrichten);"
You are supposed to get there quickly (that is how I should pass it on).

⁷For all Khoisan words and names in this thesis the currently used standard Nama/Damara orthography has been taken as a guideline. In the quotations from Rust given below I have on the whole retained Rust's orthography which is fairly close to the standard Nama/Damara orthography. I have, for technical reasons, left out Rust's sign for the "soft g" and the length-mark. In my Hai||om examples I have had to slightly adapt the standard Nama/Damara orthography. Since I have not collected information on the tones the Nama/Damara distinction between t/p/k in high tone syllables and d/b/g in low tone syllables cannot be made. Instead I have used d/b/g throughout. All translations from Krönlein/Rust into English are mine.

(4) "Sats goma !hoa geihe hâ tita || ga xuna !hoa, êta || nôu:
richte die Dinge doch bitte aus, die du mir angeblich sagen sollst!"
Please, tell me all the things you were supposedly going to tell me.

(5) "!"Gû goma êts !haibe gomaga u-ha:
gehe und bringe schnell - so ist mir aufgetragen - die Ochsen her!"
Go and get the oxen quickly, this is how I was told.

Consider the following very similar Hai||om examples which I collected among ≠Akhoe in northern Namibia in 1991:

(6) "|| ìb goma si dai-e ge go ma."
(He has supposedly given her milk.)

(7) "|| ìb goma gaikhois xeb go ma."
(He has supposedly given poison to the old woman.)

These statements were made in the context of a major conflict in the Mangetti camp when a man was accused of having caused the death of an old woman. Gossip had it that he had been seen giving food, allegedly containing poison, to the woman. The above statements were given as a response to my question as to why the man had fled the camp. Thus, *goma* plays an important role in the process of gossiping, an important but still underrated element of social interaction (see Gluckman 1963, Gordon 1971).

Gossip is not necessarily directed exclusively towards the actions of others but may also include one's own plans and intentions. Individual and group decisions are hardly ever explicitly spelled out and put in terms of opposed alternatives. A request for receiving a lift in the car is not posed as a question or as a conditional ("if there is space I would like to come along") but by implicature ("When are you going to Sanab?" [I am coming along!]) (fieldnotes J13, 14.6.91). The decision for a number of people to move camp or to undertake a visit is not reached by consultation, nor by any order of the elders. Rather, it emerges from a large number of utterances over time. A statement such as "*Ai ta koma ≠hûi-e ≠û.*" (Imagine me eating the ≠hûi fruit, [fieldnotes AIT, 11.3.93]) in a situation where a ≠hûi-e grove can be reached within a days walk is most likely to be part of a multi-stage decision making process whereby one woman wants others to join her in a



Plate 5.1 Demonstrating the way fire was made "in the old days"



Plate 5.2 Owambo woman greeting her Hai||om neighbour who is hoeing in the field (Inkete).

!haro trip. Similarly, statements like "*Ai ta koma Toroams ke*" (Say I was going to see Toroams, [fieldnotes AIT, 25.3.93]) are often part of individual and communal decision making processes. If the person one wants to see is at a distant place but no one else is interested in going there, the speaker may at some stage decide to set off on his or her own to the place in question. Nobody in the local camp will be surprised given that the intention had been announced repeatedly for some time.

In everyday Hai||om conversation *goma* is also used in this function as an interjection standing on its own. To statements such as "The people here say that free food will be distributed next week" a bystander or addressee may add "*Goma*," which can be translated as "So they say." or "I was told the same thing.". In this case it resembles the usage of another interjection in Hai||om, one that is introduced from Afrikaans. To statements such as "Maybe the car has broken down and that is why they are not coming" the comment or response in Hai||om can be a brief "*Moet*." ("apparently").

Hai||om interjections are frequently involved as tools in social manoeuvre, in particular within the context of sharing and exchange. Most common are those interjections that express surprise like "*Okha*!" (to be glossed as "Oh dear!" or "Good grief!") or that introduce a reaction to something that is felt to be an imposition such as "*Mboko*!" (to be glossed as "Unbelievable!") or "*Di !Khutse*" ("Oh my God!"). These interjections are commonly used to fend off demands while other interjections broadly glossed as "Thank you!" are frequently used in order to enforce a claim or express the expectation to receive that a share will be received by behaving as if it has already been given. These are "*Aio*!", "*Ehalo*!" (from Owambo), "*Danki*!" (from Afrikaans). In all cases emphasis can be added by reduplication and by stress. Other interjections such as "*Agwa*!" ("Nonsense!") are frequently used when discussing possible transactions and people's motives more generally.

While in the above examples a sense of uncertainty and even doubt is included, *goma* may also be used in a straightforward indirect speech

context as in (8) when the speaker was forwarding another person's message that was acoustically not understood by the addressee:

- (8) "*Hare goma.*"
(He/She says you should come.)

By far the most frequent usage of *goma* in Hai||om, however, is in the phrase I want to discuss here. In its classic manifestation it goes like this: "*Ai ta goma tabaka-e †gae*". *Tabaka-e †gae* translates into "to smoke tobacco", the introductory phrase combines *goma* with the interjection *ai* and the personal pronoun of the first person singular *ta* (in its short form). I heard *ai ta goma* used in one way or another at least once a day during the whole period of my field research. Although one can occasionally hear the conjunction *tita goma*, where the long and emphasized form of the personal pronoun is used, typically, in this phrase the personal pronoun is paired with *ai*, a mildly expletive word, that depending on intonation and lengthening, may be used to express unwillingness towards, say, a whining child ("*Aai!*"), amusement at a way-off suggestion ("*Aii!*" or "*Ai taa!*"), realization of a mistake or slip of the tongue ("*Ai!*"), and as a form of lamenting about what someone has done or said, especially when it does harm to the speaker ("*Ai ta guee!*"). Etymologically there may be a relation here with the Nharo *ai.sa* and Nama *ais ao*, literally "my mother" or affirmatively "by my mother" reported by Barnard (1985:169). In the Hai||om case the combination of these elements into *ai ta goma* has very little variation which, I suggest, adds to its institutionalization also from the perspective of the speakers. Furthermore, it is possible and frequent to leave out tense or aspect particles such as *ra* which are regular features of Hai||om (as well as Nama/Damara) declarative sentences. The sequence is thereby turned into a set phrase complemented according to the needs of the situation.

Goma, glossed as "it is said", "supposedly" produces a literal translation of "*Ai ta goma tabaka-e †gae.*" as "Well, it is said that I smoke tobacco." or "Supposedly I am smoking tobacco.". But the integrated phrase *ai ta goma* not only conveys indirect speech or doubt about what has been said. Rather it should be read as "Now, say I was smoking. Suppose I get

tobacco. - Read my lips" and that, indeed, is the way it is understood by the people listening.⁸ This became clear when, in one case, I pretended not to understand the implication of the statement "*Ai ta goma +gae || gam da ra.*" (Let's say we smoke while we discuss [i.e. while I answer your questions]). When I did not show any reaction the sentence was repeated with a *Tomatse* (Thomas + vocative) added. After a pause my interview partner changed strategies and said "*Tabaka-e au te re!*" (Give me some tobacco).

Thus, *goma* can take on a diversity of functions which cannot be understood solely in terms of its grammatical category, semantics or syntactic position but which needs to be examined in terms of language pragmatics. The context of situation of *ai ta goma* sentences is frequently one in which the speaker cannot fulfil his or her wishes for whatever reason. In many cases it is used to make others (including the researcher, but also close relatives) help the speaker to overcome this situation by doing something for him or her (in this case to share tobacco so that the speaker can smoke).

The context of situation does not haphazardly influence the meaning conveyed in language usage. The combination of contexts and language forms is regular enough to talk about a linguistic institution. The "*ai ta goma* + verb" phrase is a conventionalized linguistic unit in that sense. For short I will call it "the Hai||om desiderative", a term used in linguistics to distinguish a sentence type that (in English) translates approximately into "I want + sentence". I am not maintaining that the phrase discussed here is the only grammatical form used to express a potential, wish, request, irreality or other modes most commonly expressed by a subjunctive form in Indo-European languages. Not unlike some European languages, Khoekhoe seems to make use of the same kind of grammatical construction to express indirect

⁸In German there are idiomatic expressions that translate very closely the Khoekhoe structure, e.g. "Jetzt heißt es erst einmal rauchen für mich". The following glosses were gathered from Hai||om informants with a knowledge of English and Afrikaans respectively: "If only I could smoke." "Hou sal ons maak dat ons kan rook."

speech, unreal or potential conditions and forms of symbolic language use, such as politeness, that bear on the social position and identity of the speakers.

Considering in this context the work on Nama/Damara that was quoted at the beginning, the Hai||om desiderative may be seen as developing one specific aspect of a complex grammatical and semantic system involving the usage of *goma*, namely a representation in which the realization of potentials and individual desires is dependent on and constituted by the recognition granted by others. This development is not random but it is fostered by the Hai||om speakers in the way other social institutions are.

Hagman states with regard to *goma* that "the speaker disclaims any responsibility for the veracity of his statement" (1977:101, my emphasis). Rust in his explication of *goma* as a lexical item focuses on the indirect speech function. But it is remarkable that all the examples given by Krönlein/Rust, which I have quoted in full above, involve requests and intentional statements. This point goes unnoticed by Rust himself but it suggests that there is a foundation shared by all Khoekhoe variants but which has been developed in a specific direction only in Hai||om. See the following examples which give extracts of Hai||om discourse:

Case situation 5

Sitting at the fire cooking, cracking and roasting mangetti nuts, !Gamekhas realizes that she wants a mortar in order to pound the mangetti and to mix them with some other foods. She shouts loudly towards Dadab's hut, where the mortar is: "*Ai ta goma | gomte !hû* [...to pound mangettis]". However, neither her children nor the occupants of the neighbouring huts react to this indirect demand. After a while she gets up and collects the mortar herself. (Fieldnotes H25, 21.4.91)

Case situation 6

Coffee is being prepared at the hearth where a number of women and children have come together. Domais, who is about to pour the coffee into mugs, says "*Ai ta goma huni* [...to stir]". When nobody reacts to this, she stands up and herself gets the *drab*, which is used for stirring coffee. (Fieldnotes I20, 15.5.91)

Case situation 7

!Gamekhas wants to stop her son (about six years old) playing in her hut. After repeated attempts to ask him to play somewhere else and to leave the things in the hut alone, she calls out "*Ai ta goma haiba u hâ* [...to have a stick]". At the same time she looks around for an object which she can throw at the boy in order to stop him. The boy only stops after some object is thrown in his direction. (Fieldnotes K38, 26.7.91)

Case situation 8

We are driving through the bush when a duiker crosses the path only metres in front of us. Koreb on the seat next to me jumps up excitedly and exclaims "*Ai ta goma | nausa || khâu* [...shoot the duiker with a bow]!". (Fieldnotes M26 4.10.91)

Case situation 9

At the end of the day we are sitting together as Makeb returns with bow and arrows from an unsuccessful hunting trip. Jokingly I ask him where the kudu is that he has hunted. Tobiab who sits next to me is raising his hands as if aiming at an animal with a gun and says "*Ai ta goma ne xusa u* [...to take a thing like that]". (Fieldnotes G72, 7.4.91)

Case situation 10

At †Giseb we talk about the difficulties in obtaining water at this time of the year and about labour for the nearby Owambo homesteads. Horoseb points out to me that the Owambo have their donkeys to get water and for many other tasks. Hanakabesa, his wife, adds: "*Ai ta goma dongiba u hâ* [... to have a donkey]". (Fieldnotes N46, 25.10.91)

Case situation 11

After the sun has set !Gamekhas starts preparing the bed for herself and her young children in her grass hut. She tells two of her smaller children to pass her the blankets that have been outside so that she can make their bed but the two do not show any sign of obeying. She then says "*Ai ta goma || goe* [...to sleep]". without addressing anyone particularly. Her children, who are within hearing distance, still show no reaction until she says "*Ai ta goma †namte u hâ* [...to have blankets]". Then, the oldest daughter who is closeby gets up and passes her the blanket. (Fieldnotes K4, 21.7.91)

Case situation 12

Hoiseb has been given meat of a cow that was put down by the farm manager. He has passed the meat on to Dadab, the *gaikhoeb* who lives near his house and is an in-law to him. Dadab cooks the meat and when Hoiseb returns from work he goes to Dadab's fire and says "*Ai ta goma || gan-e o* [... to eat meat]". After a short pause he adds "*Ma te re || gan-e.*" [Pass me the meat.]. The addendum is hardly necessary because Dadab is already cutting off pieces which he passes over to Hoiseb. (Fieldnotes AIT, 11.3.93)

The cases given above range from clear cases of irrealis (8) to clear cases of request (6) but most cases are located in between. The speakers refer to personal impotence in the face of demands and unrealized potentialities. Contained implicitly is some degree of reference to the interlocutors who may become instrumental in overcoming the obstacle that prevents the realization of the implied potential. The issue is not simply one of how to get (in the sense of possess) certain things, but rather one of not being in the position to do something, to achieve an objective which may require access to tools or other things. The functionality of the objects involved (or implied) is clear but the functionality of the utterance in terms of who the speaker wants to get involved is not clear.

Semantically, the object needed may remain unmentioned (as in cases 5 and 6) or the activity for which it is needed may only be implied (as in case 7). In case 11 a sequence of two *ai ta goma* sentences shifts from an implied object (blankets) to an implied activity (to sleep). The two sentences in a row make the intention more explicit. Finally, in case 12 a direct command is used to underline the indirect request. It is noteworthy that the same formulations are employed with regard to a male elder (case 12) as well as young children (cases 7 and 10). Thus, it is not only a matter of non-authoritarian education among "San" but there is also a more general lack of coercive power in personal interaction. Individual integrity but at the same time individual powerlessness are communicated in these events.

Direct demands also frequently occur among Hai||om but they may be combined with indirect requests. The kind of strategy employed in these cases is distinct from imperative statements and other direct ways of asking

for something in that it involves an inference. It is an indirect form of expression, one that needs to be cognitively worked out by another person involved, who may be either an explicit addressee or a bystander. Such a conversational implicature, as it is called in pragmatics (see Levinson 1983:97), conveys more meaning than is said literally, as opposed to a different meaning in the case of idioms. Implicatures, according to the Gricean understanding, are created whenever speakers apparently violate the maxims of cooperative conversation and thereby force the interlocutor to make inferences from this mode of expressing things "off record" (see Brown and Levinson 1989:58-84). An implicature therefore creates a grey zone of meaning that can be exploited not only for the purposes of individual speech acts but also as part of processes that have lasting social implications. For a closer investigation of these processes the next section turns to patterns of greeting employed by Hai||om in everyday interaction.

Hai||om Greetings

As demonstrated above implicatures themselves are powerful social tools in the process of creating and manipulating social identity, because an implication is not only aimed at influencing an interlocutor's specific action but, according to Brown and Levinson (1989), it re-defines the social relation between interlocutors. The theory that underlies Brown and Levinson's model is based on the notion that all linguistic interaction can be understood in terms of rational strategies based on the universal fact that speakers consider above all their "face" and that of their interlocutors.

Cultural variation is relevant in three social variables, namely social distance, power, and the "rating of impositions". It is a particular pattern of constellation with regard to these three factors that is seen as the specific "ethos" of a group (Brown and Levinson 1989:251). Fields for testing these universal assumptions have been "politeness" (Brown and Levinson 1989) and "domination" (Strecker 1988). In the following I want to look at



Plate 5.3 An old Hai||om couple at their fire.



Plate 5.4 Men at their fire place (!hais |ais, olupare) at |Kham |kham cooking the soxa meat of an ostrich.

Hai||om greeting patterns with regard to these ideas.

≠Akhoe greetings are, like other aspects of Hai||om language, characterized by a host of non-Hai||om forms taken from neighbouring languages without, however, necessarily taking over the pragmatics used among neighbouring groups, as well.

In some cases, especially in dealings with dominant outsiders, ≠Akhoe simply adopt the greetings used by the dominant group. In the case of the people of |Gomais some of these greetings are then carried over into everyday usage with other Hai||om. Greetings such as "*Moro!*", "*Meta!*", and "*Xunda!*" are regarded as derived from Afrikaans: "*More!*" (Good Morning), "*Middag!*" (Good Day), "*Gooienaand!*" (Good Evening/Night). Other greetings such as "*Wa lale po!*" (morning), "*Wu uala po!*" (midday), and "*Tango fango!*" (evening) are of Owambo origin. Standard Damara greetings such as "≠*Khai du go?*" (lit. "Did you wake up?") are also used. What is more interesting is that the most commonly used ≠Akhoe greetings have structurally incorporated elements of Owambo but in a selective fashion. The greetings just mentioned are incorporated as initial salutations which are then followed by an elaborate one-to-one greeting in a fashion similar to that described by Sugawara for G|wi and G||ana groups (cf. Sugawara 1988:193-4). Instead of being satisfied with a brief "*Mati sa?*" (How are you?) used by most Damara and Hai||om living in towns, ≠Akhoe engage in a long verbal exchange. It exceeds even the time-consuming greetings used in Owambo and I think that sometimes ≠Akhoe are to some degree mimicking the Owambo practice. The standard ≠Akhoe greeting at midday may take the following form:

"≠*Khai tsi?*" - "≠*Khai ta go!*"

"!*Gâi se?*" - "!*Gâi se!*"

"*Gara se?*" - "*Gara se!*"

"*Hoa do?*" - "*Hoa da!*"

"!*Khub ôa se?*" - "!*Khub ôa se!*"

"*Mî toma se?*" - "*Mî toma se!*"

"*Ombilis /hoa?*" - "*Ombilis ge!*"

If we are looking for a rough English gloss we might translate the questions as "Did you wake up well?", "Really well?", "In the light of the sun?", "All of your people?", "As a child of God?", "Nothing to say (complain)?", "With peace?". The answers repeat the question in an affirmative fashion. *Ombilis /hoa* contains the Owambo word *ombili* (peace) which is part of the standard Owambo greeting. The same happens in the evening when the Owambo "*Watokelwa po?*" is incorporated into the greeting sequence as "*Tokera tsi?*". This is so despite the fact that there is a \neq Akhoe word for peace ($\neq kh\hat{i}b$), but this is hardly ever used in greetings, and there is also a word for "evening" used in the Damara greeting "*Gâi !uis!*" (Good evening/night!). Instead, in a "traditional" \neq Akhoe greeting (that is, the way people living today remember it) the Owambo word is used. This creates sufficient overlap with Owambo greetings so that in some cases \neq Akhoe responses may be given to an Owambo greeting (and vice versa) in a one-to-one greeting sequence between \neq Akhoe and Owambo speakers.

Despite these parallels there are two important pragmatic features in which the \neq Akhoe practice does not follow the Owambo example. The greeting sequence is initiated by the resident person (the one who is approached) rather than by the visiting/approaching person. And the greeting is offered individually to everyone present and by everyone joining the circle. The visiting individual would then ask the same questions in return and he or she⁹ might also make use of the theoretically unlimited variations on and a large number of amendments to the greeting phrases listed above which are those used most widely.

This difference is particularly striking in the context of entering a

⁹Sugawara in his quantitative study shows that there are considerable differences in greeting frequency according to age, sex, and social distance (cf. Sugawara 1988:194-7). G | wi and G || ana adolescent boys and girls did not greet each other at all and women participated in the greeting interaction to a markedly lower degree than men. Greeting frequency increases with distance in the kinship relation. Although I have frequently observed Hai || om women and adolescents who engaged in one-to-one greetings I would not be surprised if similar, less marked, variations were to show in a quantitative analysis of Hai || om greeting frequency.

homestead or camp, to be discussed in more detail in the following chapter. When entering (or approaching) an Owambo homestead it is conventional to call out a greeting in order to announce one's arrival.¹⁰

Owambo and Europeans when entering a ≠Akhoe camp use the same procedure which inverts the Hai||om terms of how power is distributed in these situations. It is the resident, or visited person who is in control of the greeting sequence in that he or she decides when to start the greeting and how long the sequence will be. This remains the case even if the "resident" is second to arrive on the scene. If, for instance, a group of men visit a ≠Akhoe camp, they sit quietly at a fire or in a shady place until they are greeted by a resident. If, some hours later, women arrive who belong to the camp being visited it is up to them, as residents, to initiate greetings. They may decide to pass by first in order to unload whatever they are carrying before they approach the visitors to greet them. Equally, greetings may be initiated only after some urgent things have been done (such as lighting a fire) or have been arranged with the visitors (such as an invitation to move into the shade first). As Sugawara has pointed out the openness of domestic space and of group boundaries and the fluidity of a camp focus attention on greetings as a means of distinguishing insiders from outsiders (cf. Sugawara 1988:207-8), a distinction that has far-reaching implications for transactions and other aspects of social interaction. Food and other items usually flow from resident to visitor so that the visitor can expect to be given and the resident can expect the visitor to request something (cf. Sugawara 1988:208).

On the other hand, it is in the hands of the occupants of a place to initiate the interaction. Since residents may soon be visitors themselves they only have a situational dominance. Language use plays an important role in forms of situative authority as it has also been recorded from other groups of southern African hunter-gatherers. Inattentiveness in the context of greetings, but also in the context of disputes, is a conventional Hai||om

¹⁰This seems to be a common feature of most Bantu-speaking societies. In Botswana, for instance, repeated "*Koko!*" calls are used by the visitor to announce his arrival and to gain the residents' attention.

strategy that parallels the "auditory withdrawal" of the G | wi described by Silberbauer (cf. Silberbauer 1987[1982]:29). As Sugawara emphasized all ethological explanations of greeting behaviour fall short if they do not recognize the conventionalized nature of greeting interaction (cf. Sugawara 1988:209).

Even in contexts in which close relatives meet after a long time, greetings appears fairly dispassionate to a European observer. But in the course of the greeting procedure there are several points where existing joking or avoidance relationships become relevant. Thus, the residents of a camp have a chance to identify the visitors before deciding as to whether they should greet them or stay at a distance. Close or distant seating is particularly relevant (cf. Sugawara 1988:190-205, see also Sugawara 1984, 1990). Furthermore, the length and content of the greeting sequence can be elaborately exploited by joking partners or kept at a minimum by avoidance partners. As in Brown and Levinson's model of "face threatening acts", power and distance seem to be important factors in how the interaction proceeds. The question remains whether the underlying principle is one of "face wants" (protecting ego's or alter's face) or not. As Brown and Levinson indicate at one stage (1989:249), "face wants" may be a minor motive in some cultural contexts. What seems to be central in Hai||om greetings, but also in other forms of symbolic language usage, is not so much the possibility of "face threatening acts" but threats to someone's sphere of action. The hands of visitors who have not yet been greeted are bound. Visitors can only partake in the camp's conversations, actions and exchanges after they have been greeted. The strategies of avoidance partners, say a man and his mother-in-law, involve a notion of what may be called "protecting face". However in Hai||om everyday life such strategies may more appropriately be seen as avoidance of acts which would infringe on alter's freedom to act according to his or her own wish. Hai||om avoid to provoke an drastic action on alter's side, such as moving further away or terminating the co-presence in other ways (see Silberbauer 1987[1982]:29, Sugawara 1988:203-5, 1990:105-6).

≠Akhoe have incorporated the greetings of neighbouring groups in what seems to be an attempt to open a way into these neighbouring societies and to link up with them. In their dealings with outsiders ≠Akhoe use animal metaphors ("We are chicken but they are buffaloes.") and extend age differences ("We are children but they are grown-ups.") to designate their position as a social group. They do not seem to be primarily concerned about keeping their "face" or about pleasing their counterparts by self-abasement. Rather, as in the case of greetings the preoccupation seems to lie with potential and the ability to do certain things.

The core element that motivates such a strategy seems to be a combination of two "central values" that form a central complementary element to the value of "face" that is dominant in many other cultural contexts. These values are that of "being equal" and that of "being powerless". The two are closely linked and the same language usage pattern may express both, egalitarianism within the society and powerlessness in relations with outsiders. This ideology is an expression of their economic and political dependency on other groups as it is perceived by the ≠Akhoe. Considering their weak political and economic position this "ideology" is not a hypothetical superstructure but instead a realistic assessment of the status quo and a framework for handling that status quo. However, both egalitarianism and powerlessness are not simply descriptions of the status quo but they are used as complementary, more or less implicit, propositions in social strategies. These values, just like the notion of "face", is not explicitly referred to but the extent to which they are shared and to which they are effective in everyday life lies in the power of symbolic language usage to invoke them.

Critiques of Brown and Levinson's model have focused on the universality of the Gricean maxims and of notions such as "face" (see Schicho 1994). But the notion of "face wants" can be defined broadly enough to incorporate such wants as they are involved in the Hai||om case (see Brown and Levinson 1989:62-4). However, the important variables are not only the cultural definition of social positions such as "resident" and

"visitor" but also the social definition of conventional programmes or institutions that influence the ways in which residents and visitors face each other. Or, to put it differently, implicatures, whether in politeness or in other fields, are not always the outcome of rational exploitations of contradictions between conventions of language and culture. Rather, there are implicatures that are as much subject to practices of institutionalization and conventionalization as the conventions on which they rely.

Conventionalization and Institutionalization in Language Usage

In all examples of symbolic language usage given here, ritual language, indirect requests and greetings, the interlocutors make inferences from what has been said "beyond the semantic content of the sentences uttered" (Levinson 1983:103). What the speaker in case 5 above wanted to convey was not a straightforward report on what she was doing, thinking of doing or about to do. The *ai ta goma* phrase introduces the desires and plans of the speaker and leaves it to the listener to work out what keeps the speaker from realizing it. Theoretical pragmatics distinguishes between conversational and conventional implicatures but in this case it is difficult to decide precisely what we are dealing with. There is undoubtedly a strong element of conventionalization involved on which the speakers rely in their situative strategies. This is not just the case with regard to the *ai ta goma* phrase which triggers regular implicatures but also in the case of ritual language and greetings. On the other hand, speakers can use conventional language in a fairly ad hoc manner and can in a particular situational context, trigger an implicature, which are characteristics of typical conversational implicatures (Levinson 1983:116). We may therefore be confronted with a case that is to be located somewhere within the process of conventionalization, a process still not well understood even in otherwise well-documented languages (Levinson 1983:166) let alone in a Khoe language like Hai || om for which little information on pragmatics is available.

I suggest that the knowledge anthropology has accumulated about social institutions can help to explore and explain the pragmatic dimension of linguistic phenomena such as implicatures, ritual language usage, and greetings. Conventionalization is better understood as an aspect of institutionalization which also incorporates conversational strategies. With regard to the institutionalization of language usages it is noteworthy that a feature of grammatical potential which, in our case, is shared by all Khoekhoe variants can turn into a quite specific language tool when exposed to a particular social environment. Similarly, greetings taken over from neighbouring groups can gain new meanings when incorporated in institutionalized Hai||om pragmatics. In this case the social environment is characterized by the Hai||om repertoire of political strategies and social values. That is to say, while Gricean maxims (just like other maxims of rational choice, say, in the economic sphere) are involved, the everyday violations of these maxims are not always creative individual acts or a mechanical adherence to conventions (here understood as "rules") but they are subject to social negotiation as well as to processes of institutionalization. It is precisely these negotiations involving institutions that are missed out if we assume that a conversational implicature is distinct from a conventional one by a gradual and continuous increase in social involvement. In fact institutions affect both kinds of implicatures.

The effective use of *ai ta goma* transcends the conversational situation and proves to be an effective social institution since it involves shared basic assumptions about the power and obligations of the individual person. To use the *ai ta goma* phrase is to invoke the socially shared notion of the powerless and inadequate Hai||om individual, an implicit proposition which sustains the effectiveness of this phrase. The usage of the *ai ta goma* phrase relies on a "problematic side" of egalitarianism and individual autonomy, that is, the inability to enforce the support of others, which is in turn reinforced by the frequent use of such phrases. The conventional usages of *goma* form the backdrop of more equivocal conversational usages in which inadequate access to information is indicated (as a matter of

evidentiality). If an ostensibly affluent and powerful outsider, like the anthropologist in my case, uses the *ai ta goma* phrase in order to be given something, the Hai||om interlocutors are amused because I invoke a socially defined powerlessness that by most definitions does not apply to me. Hai||om ideas on egalitarian relations and cooperation among insiders, which the individual cannot enforce but continually needs to solicit, are involved but are not openly expressed. While Hai||om speakers are engaged with the tactics as to when to use *ai ta goma* and when to use a straightforward demand in order to overcome obstacles in the process of optimizing their individual potential, the social institution, in this case the institutionalized notion of powerless individuals, is already there and guides the violation of conversational maxims. Institutions are not simply the routine (understood as unproductive) modes of thinking and speaking epitomized by conventional implicatures. They are effective on the level that underlies conversational implicatures, as well.

As Wilkins has shown for Mparntwe Arrernte (Aranda), regular interjections, including "hearsay particles" or "quotatives", can be used to attach "in a principled way" an "invariant (core) implicature" to utterances that contain interjections (see Wilkins 1986:585). This, it seems to me, is also true for Hai||om interjections such as *goma*. Often the implicatures are so standardized that it is easily recognized that they convey criticisms or complaints (and we may add for the ≠Akhoe case: wishful thinking, requests). They achieve this by exploiting a mismatch between the situation and the typical use of the particle (cf. Wilkins 1986:587). In the case of *goma* there is in many situations a clear mismatch between the situation and the typical usage of *goma* as a quotative ("so they say"). Following Wilkins we may regard the usage of *goma* in its request or wishful thinking meaning as atypical rather than non-conventional. The way in which it introduces a fixed implicature follows "specific conventional principles" (cf. Wilkins 1986:394). In other words, the pragmatic usage of *goma* is as much part of the language tools shared by all ≠Akhoe as the word *goma* itself.

Implicatures seem to play a major role in the way language usage

affects structural change in languages. This is interesting to note since there is apparently no parallel usage of the Hai||om "*goma*" in Nama or Damara, which are closely related to Hai||om. After many attempts to reconstruct the history of Khoisan languages, a discussion of implicatures such as the Hai||om desiderative may help to direct appropriate attention to the speakers as social subjects in our theory of language as a changing, processual phenomenon. The social subjects and the effects of changing social contexts are reintroduced into our descriptions of processes of linguistic change, grammaticalization and borrowing between neighbouring languages that otherwise would not take sufficient account of social motivations and cultural variation.

Conclusion

Hai||om ritual language, Hai||om indirect discourse, and Hai||om greetings, which are described in this chapter, qualify well for what I have identified as "linguistic institutions". Extending the notion of institution to include language usage and pragmatics, and investigating social institutions in terms of their pragmatics have both proved fruitful. The ethnography of speaking has provided a productive "vantage point on social life as communicatively constituted and on language as socially constituted" (Bauman and Sherzer 1989:ix). It provides a way to contribute more fine-grained interactional data to the analysis of "social institution", a notion which would remain vague without substantive data of this kind of face-to-face interaction. The analysis has been carried further by incorporating work based on Grice's ideas on the cooperative principle in communication. This work shows, on the basis of detailed documentation of social interaction and its elements such as body posture, exchange, and, above all, language usage, how acting subjects follow or manipulate shared values and conventional meanings. The socially negotiated character of social institutions becomes apparent and can help to replace the misleading and discarded understanding of social organization as

a set of static "roles", governed by rigid rules and enacted more or less accurately by social actors.¹¹ With regard to current discussions about hunter-gatherer groups this chapter has led to the conclusion that "egalitarianism", "individualism" and also "powerlessness", which many ethnographers have intuitively felt among these groups, are central principles from which speakers operate in language usage and interaction. In their strategies social actors can be flexible with regard to these principles. They can exploit the principle of individual powerlessness knowing that there is the principle of demand sharing and equal access to which anyone may resort. Conversely powerlessness can be invoked in order to protect oneself from demands.

To regard linguistic phenomena as involving social institutions is to assume that language, just like other cultural materials, is appropriated by social actors in manifold ways. As Fuller has recently shown with regard to the Khoekhoe concept of *||gâus* (see next chapter), the appropriation of social institutions is an ongoing process (cf. Fuller 1993). This is true for a whole range of phenomena that involve language, and not only for indigenous concepts such as *||gâus*. In this chapter I have focused on examples that appear to be particularly important in Hai||om everyday life. Of course, this does not preclude the possibility that there are other important linguistic institutions in Hai||om or in any other Khoekhoe variants for that matter. On the contrary, the case presented here suggests that there are linguistic institutions to be found in all kinds of fields: conflict resolution, decision making, evading pressure, levelling differences, gossiping, and the like. Furthermore, as the following chapter will show, these linguistic institutions may be directly supported by non-linguistic practices such as the construction of a *||gâus* or camp.

¹¹Successful examples for applying such a strategy in ethnographic research are the works of Brown and Levinson (1989), Strecker (1988) and Sugawara (1992). The theoretical foundations that have inspired this kind of ethnography is the work of E. Goffman, H. P. Grice, J. Gumperz, D. Hymes and others.

Chapter Six

Settlement Patterns and the Permeability of Space

Introduction

In chapter one I have already pointed out that hut styles and the organization of domestic space are part of the diversity that is characteristic of Hai||om cultural style today. Diversity in settlement patterns has been reported from other southern African hunter-gatherer groups and was used to demonstrate "San" flexibility and adaptability to changing circumstances (cf. Barnard 1980b, 1991). More generally, Moore in her work on the Marakwet of Kenya pointed to the difficulties of the concept of a "typical house" by asking: "[...] are we seeking an 'ideal' house, a typical house, or merely a collage of common features noticed by one anthropologist?" (Moore 1986:91). Instead of perpetuating an essentialist approach Moore exploited the diversity of manifestations of a Marakwet homestead in order to describe the underlying processes of expanding and shrinking households which follows the stages in the life-cycle of the male household head (cf. Moore 1986). In her analysis diverse styles in housing and settlement were treated not simply as markers of modernization but also as representations and reactions of individuals who are situated differently with regard to the changing socio-economic environment.

The investigation of Hai||om settlement patterns in this chapter tries to develop this approach further. Two questions will be investigated in this chapter: firstly, whether there is a "social style" apparent in the diversity of Hai||om camps and secondly, whether and how the spatial arrangements in turn affect Hai||om social relationships.

Diversity in Hai||om Settlements

As was already indicated in chapter one Hai||om settlements such as |Gomais are characterized by internal diversity. But diversity also prevails outside large settlements as the following cases illustrate.

Case 1 !Gai+nas

The camp at !Gai+nas (figure 6.1.1) is situated in a remote part of the Owambo communal area. It is used by Hai||om from Botos (see below) during the dry season (*sores*) when the primary economic pursuit is subsistence foraging. Lack of water at Botos (the nearest water source is about ten kilometres away) is given as the reason for moving to !Gai+nas

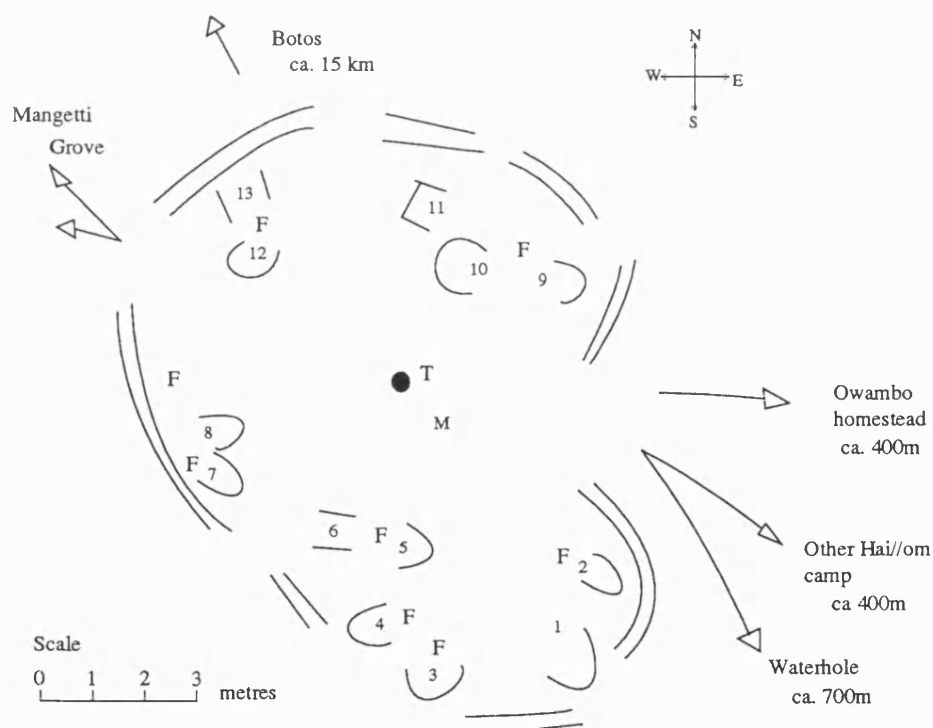


Figure 6.1.1 !Gai+nas camp layout

which has a permanent waterhole.¹

By the time the Hai||om move to !Gaiǀnas they will already have been fetching water over that distance for several weeks and will do this again when they return to Botos in December. They stay for two weeks at |Khinigobes. This is a mangetti grove that is about half way between Botos and !Gaiǀnas, with the nearest water source a good two hours' walk away at !Gaiǀnas. The end of the crop season and the availability of wild food (mangetti) here are factors that seem at least as decisive when moving as easy access to water.

!Gaiǀnas has three names, each reflecting its different functions for three groups associated with that place. It is "!"Gaiǀnas", which is probably its oldest name, for those who return there regularly to live on wild fruit. It is called "Inkete", derived from the relatively recent Owambo name, by the local group that stays there all year long and lives in close association with the only two Owambo homesteads that have been established there. And it is "||Khana ||khab" for those Hai||om who are not part of the "band cluster" to which this land (!*hus*) belongs but who move through the area when visiting other places. This name is derived from a plant that grows near the permanent waterholes at this place, and it is these waterholes which are particularly important to the travellers.

The !Gaiǀnas group chooses a new campsite a few hundred metres away from that of the previous year and about the same distance from the other Hai||om group that occupies Inkete permanently. It is situated somewhat closer to, but out of sight of, the two Owambo homesteads, which during this time of year are only occupied by a few individuals as most occupants will have moved closer to the core Owambo areas in the west. The Hai||om of !Gaiǀnas build small grass huts while they have camped under small windshields in their interim campsite. There are altogether thirteen huts at !Gaiǀnas, more than in the permanent camp at Botos because

¹Since 1993 Botos has had a borehole which is controlled by the local Owambo who provide the fuel to run the pump.

the grass huts are too small to give shelter to more than two adult persons.

At this time of the year there is hardly any work to be done for the Owambo, except occasionally gathering grass and cutting poles for house construction, so that the Hai||om rely on other forms of subsistence. The dry season is said to be a good season for hunting. However, hunting returns are low since Hai||om there do not have access to a gun. Instead, they continue to use bows and arrows including poisoned arrows. Gathering provides the bulk of the diet during the dry season, with many fruits ripening during the months the camp at !Gaiǀnas exists, especially sought-after food such as *!no-e* (*Strychnos cocculoides*) and *ǀkhia-e* (*Strychnos pungens*). Other sources of subsistence include handicrafts such as woodwork and blacksmith's work. These crafts are practised throughout the year but are intensified at !Gaiǀnas when the crop season is over. The men often gather under a shady tree near the camp to do ironwork together. The shady tree at the centre of the camp is the site for the medicine dance that brings together all residents of the camp (see chapter seven). It is also a favourite gathering place during the day, especially when there are visitors.

Case 2 Botos

The settlement site at Botos (figure 6.2.1) from which Hai||om travel to !Gaiǀnas for dry season foraging (case 1 above) has only been a long-term dwelling place for about a decade, since Kwanyama-speaking Owambo farmers moved 80 kilometres to the south-east from their established settlement area close to the Angolan border. Hai||om claim that this place has no Hai||om name but "Botos", which is derived from the original Owambo name. Prior to the arrival of the Kwanyama settlers, Botos had little relevance to the Hai||om, since within a few kilometres there were places that were much richer in wild food and water resources. However, the type of settlement represented by Botos had been established at least several decades earlier further to the west where Owambo of the Ndonga kingdom have been gradually moving into land occupied by Hai||om and where Hai||om since at least the beginning of the 20th century have visited the

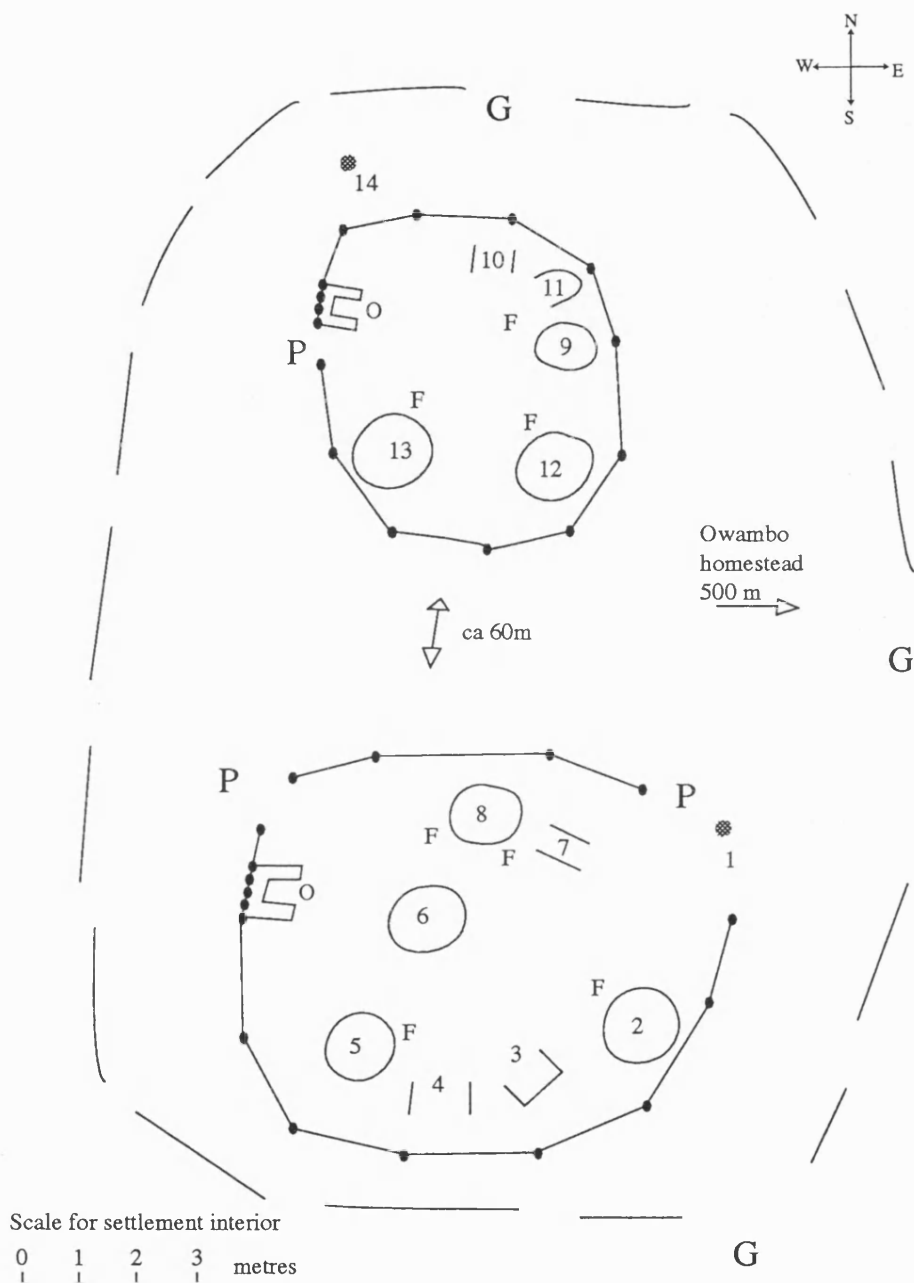


Figure 6.2.1 Botos camp layout. (Size of surrounding field and fence not to scale.)

Ndonga to trade. The Botos area served as a hinterland for Ndonga hunting expeditions and as a refuge for members of the Ndonga royalty in the course of power struggles (Williams 1991:142; see also chapter two). At present, the main attraction of Botos for Hai||om lies in the opportunities for work, income, and exchange with the now permanently settled Owambo. Work is available during the entire crop cycle of millet and sorghum, from the



Plate 6.1 !Gai=nas, the subsistence foraging camp in the dry season. Note that one of the few shady trees in the area has been selected for the centre of the camp.



Plate 6.2 Botos, abandoned during the dry season. Huts, built in Owambo style are protected from cattle and other animals with thorn branches (the *olupare* to the right/west).

clearing of fields just before the main rainy season begins in December and January up to the harvesting and threshing of these crops in May and June. During that time, water is available in waterholes and employment is available from the local Owambo, who provide the workers with food and drink.

The Hai||om also make their own fields during the wet season. An area of almost three acres (ca. 12,000 square metres) surrounding the houses has been cleared and is protected against cattle by a thorn-branch fence. The Hai||om of Botos own only a few goats themselves but the nearest Owambo homestead is only 500 metres away and the cattle and goats of the Owambo graze in the surrounding bush. The fenced-in area which includes the field and the settlement sites is not utilized to its full extent. Hai||om spend much more time working in the fields of the Owambo than in their own fields, particularly at the beginning of the season, so that the crops of their own gardens suffer.

The huts are arranged in two sites separated by about sixty metres. The field is effectively divided into two halves, one half for each site, and these are separated by a non-utilized zone a few metres wide which includes the main footpath. The sites are surrounded by a fence that forms a simple barrier. The huts are built in Owambo style, circles of wooden poles with thatched roofs on top. No clay or dung is used to fill the gaps between the poles. The southern site of Botos consists of four Owambo-style huts (called *nondas* [Sg.]), and the northern site consists of three such huts. In the southern site, the hut of the oldest man in the settlement is in the east next to a shady place where people sit during the day, doing handicrafts like wood-carving, and where the mortar is placed for stamping millet. The fireplace in the west is made in the style of the Kwanyama *olupale*. In a Kwanyama homestead this is the place where visitors sit when entering the homestead and where the owner receives them. The Hai||om have a number

of names for this fireplace, including *olupare*² (visitor's place), *hos* (meeting place), and *!khais* (men's fire). At Botos it is also called *≡khoa-ais*, literally "elephant's place", referring to the medicine trance dance which is associated with the elephant and which takes place at this fireplace. The oldest man in the settlement is a *!gaiaob* (a medicine man), and during the medicine dance men are seated around the *!khais* (*≡khoa-ais*) while the women and children gather around a second fire a few metres to the east.

Women usually do not sit or cook at the *olupare* or *!khais*. In the northern settlement the cooking and eating place of the women and children is exactly opposite the *olupare*. Food is usually consumed along the lines of gender difference, the men either sitting at a different fire from the women or having a plate of their own.

The permanent huts in the northern site are inhabited by a married couple, the husband's widowed mother, and the eldest daughter and her husband (doing brideservice). The southern site has a hut for the widowed eldest man, a son of his with his wife and children, and two widowed women. There are temporary dwelling places in both sites which - during the dry season - consist of a number of blankets bounded by a wooden pole layed down on each side and - in the wet season - of a grass hut or a shelter made of millet stalks. These are shelters for temporary visitors or preliminary houses for people who are about to join this local group permanently.

Case 3 ||Khausis

||Khausis (figure 6.3.1) is a commercial farm near the Omuramba Owambo at the border of the Owambo area, some 20 kilometres south-east of the main homestead at |Gomais. It was among the first farms to be established in this area at the beginning of this century. Only in the late 1950s was the

²*Olupare* or *orupare* are Hai||om pronunciations of the Owambo word *olupale*. Since the Hai||om *olupare* serves slightly different functions than the Owambo *olupale* I keep the two terms to distinguish the Hai||om from the Owambo fireplace.

whole farming area fenced in. Since there were hardly any Owambo settlements in the south-easterly part of the so-called Owambo region at that time, farm workers were recruited among the local Hai||om and others who came from places as far away as the area around Botos and ǀGîseb. Individual Owambo and Kavango contract workers came in small numbers and in many cases married Hai||om women. The children were usually brought up as Hai||om. During the war, the employment of Hai||om was fostered because many farmers regarded "Bushmen" as being more loyal to them than Owambo or Kavango. After the war, a different tendency emerged: farmers now valued the "good reliability" of Owambo and Kavango workers in preference to the "poor reliability" of the Hai||om.

At ǁKhausis, as on other farms, workers have only limited freedom to build their huts how and where they want. Farm owners usually provide a small piece of ground for their workers to build their huts on. At the same time they provide the building materials people are allowed to use (usually not grass but poles and corrugated iron sheets). While in earlier years stone houses were only built for contract workers from the Owambo and Kavango areas, some Hai||om workers of long residence are now also provided with stone houses. At ǁKhausis the farmer built a stone wash house for the use of all workers and their dependents. However, only the men used it; the women, at the men's insistence, constructed their own individual washing enclosures some distance from the huts.

In contrast to the houses at ǀGomais, those at ǁKhausis all have front yards a few metres square with surrounding walls made of corrugated iron and wooden poles. This enclosure is called a *hos*, the same term used at Botos for the men's fireplace. Instead of one *hos* as in Botos, every house at ǁKhausis has one. This fragmentation of the communal *hos* and the enclosure of the *hos* belonging to the core family suggests that individual core families become more isolated as they gain importance in several aspects of life on the commercial farms. These aspects include the distribution of rations and provision of housing per family and granting residence rights and extended medical care according to core family

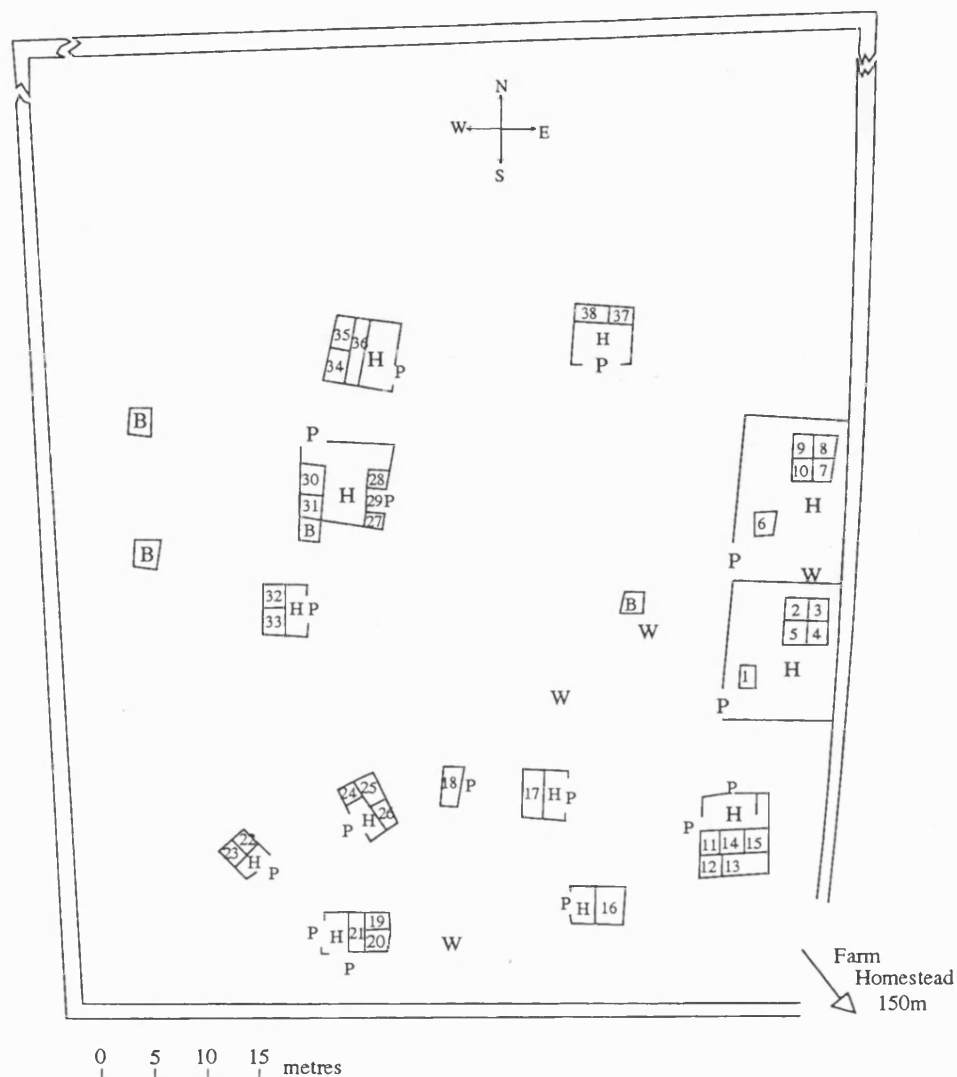


Figure 6.3.1 ||Khausis camp layout

connection.

From a Hai||om perspective, the main problem with working and living on commercial farms is the fact that farmers are very reluctant to allow anyone on their farms who is not a worker or an immediate kinsman of a worker. Many farmers run their farms with as few as three or four workers. The primary economic unit of production, sharing, and consumption is the nuclear family, and private ownership of more valuable goods is tolerated. Some workers at ||Khausis own donkey carts, bicycles and waterhoses, which are loaned to others. Here, unlike in the other settlements discussed in this chapter, individuals write their names, initials,

or signs on cups and dishes to mark ownership. A few workers even have bank accounts, which are managed by the farmer. Nevertheless, the theoretical principle of universal kinship still prevails, as all Hai||om workers who are co-resident on the farm use kinship terms in their dealings with each other.

Mapping Domestic Space

Fourie (1927:51), in many respects the most reliable of the early Hai||om ethnographers, presented a ground plan of a Hai||om settlement (figure 6.4) which unfortunately has the problems of "ideal type" descriptions criticized by Moore (see above). Fourie did not include the camp map of his preliminary contribution in his later article (1928) but he still maintains that, in contrast to (!Kung) camps in the Kalahari, the Hai||om encampment "is laid out on a definite plan" (Fourie 1966[1928]:86). According to his description the huts are arranged in an "irregular circle of 60 to 80 yards" (55 to 73 metres) with the following characteristics (cf. Fourie [1927:51]).

- Inside the circle are the large tree and gathering place of the men (!*heis* or 1966[1928]:86, see figure 6.4 for the camp layout as adopted from Fourie !*kheis*, no. 1), the dancing place (no.11, to the west of the !*kheis*), and the huts of adolescent boys (no.9) and girls (no.10).
- The hut of the "chief" (*gaikhoeb*) is in the east (no.2) "facing, but at some distance away from, the others" (Fourie 1927:51).
- The northern half of the circle (to the right of the *gaikhoeb*'s hut are huts for the eldest sister of the *gaikhoeb* (no.3) and any other of his sisters when they are visiting him.
- The southern half of the circle (to the *gaikhoeb*'s left) are the huts of the *gaikhoeb*'s brothers (no.6) and other families (no.7) that belong to the camp (|| *gâus*).
- At the opposite end are the huts of the *gaikhoeb*'s daughters (no.5) who may visit him and who are in an in-law (avoidance) relationship with him.

- Somewhat outside the circle are huts for visitors from neighbouring groups and of widowed persons (no.8).

Fourie's map allows comparisons between the spatial arrangements in the homesteads of neighbouring groups. The association of seniority with the east has also been reported from the Damara (cf. Vedder 1923:16-7) and Western Bantu-speaking groups such as the Herero (cf. Schinz 1891:156). In the Hai||om case there is no marked separation into a female and a male half of the camp, a feature found in the Herero case as well as in many homesteads of the Southern Bantu-speaking groups (cf. Kuper 1980).

However, problems with this way of mapping camp layouts become apparent when Fourie's drawing is compared to a plan of "a large encampment" ("Großwerftplan") recorded by Lebzelter not long after Fourie's publication (cf. Lebzelter 1934:84). Unfortunately, the cardinal directions are not clear from Lebzelter's drawing. If the direction given for Fourie's figure (which he represents just on top of his own) was meant to apply to both figures then the *gaikhoeb*'s hut is not east of the others and the directions given by Fourie do not hold (cf. Lebzelter 1934:84). For the following comparison I assume that the headman's hut in Lebzelter's map is also in the east.

- The tree is still in the middle of the camp. The dance place is not mentioned but the "main fireplace" is in front of the huts of the headman's wives. There are no other huts within the circle.

- The hut of the "headman of the camp" ("Werftoberhaupt") is close to that of his wives (to his left, south?), of his "grandparents" and parents (to his right, north?).

- Some distance from the *gaikhoeb*'s hut are the huts of his two married sons (slightly to the left), of some of his sister's orphaned children, of his brother's son-in-law, and of his widowed eldest sister (slightly to the right).

- The *gaikhoeb*'s hut is the only hut that is somewhat outside the circle.

Part of the problem when comparing the two camps is that the descriptions given are inadequate. Fourie does not tell us where the *gaikhoeb*'s wives were residing - they were possibly residing among the

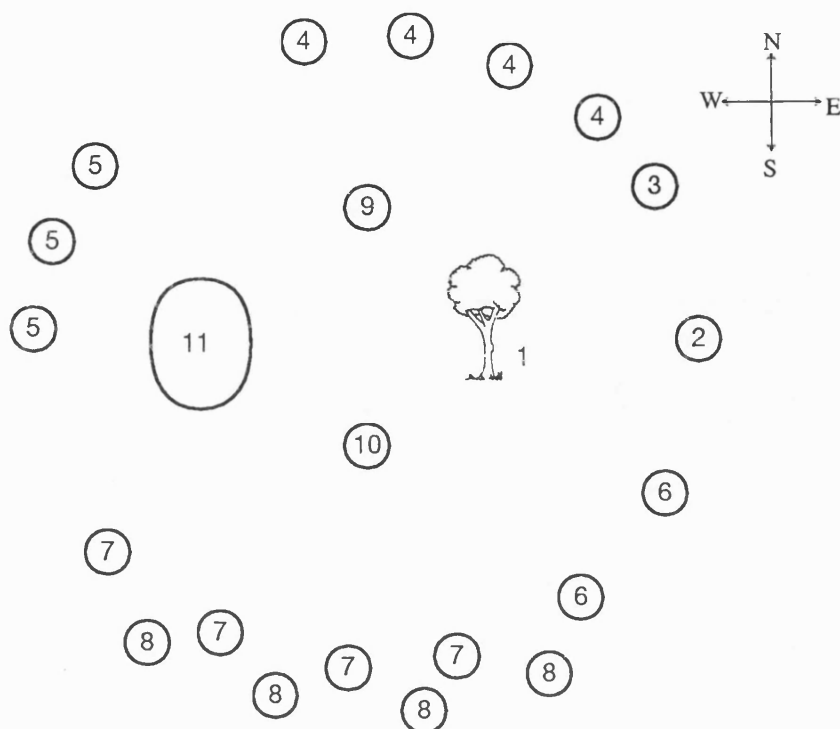


Figure 6.4 Hai||om settlement layout according to Fourie

"huts of married couples" in the south (no. 7). Moreover, the northern half of the camp seems only to be occupied in case the *gaikhoeb*'s sisters come to visit him, leaving the circle incomplete. It also becomes clear that there are many contingencies that can change the layout of a plan such as the presence of visitors, of adolescent boys and girls, of surviving parents or grandparents, of sons-in-law and married sons who have not yet moved away. Given these possible sources of diversity there are, in the end, only two very broad patterns that seem to prevail across two cases. Firstly, seniority decreases moving away from the east (or away from the *gaikhoeb*'s hut). Secondly, there is a separation between the *gaikhoeb*'s own family (his wives and children), residing to his left/to the south, and the families of his sisters residing to his right/to the north. While these features need to be recognized they are much less precise than Fourie suggested and therefore not as different from the flexible arrangements found among other African hunter-gatherers (see Woodburn 1972:204).

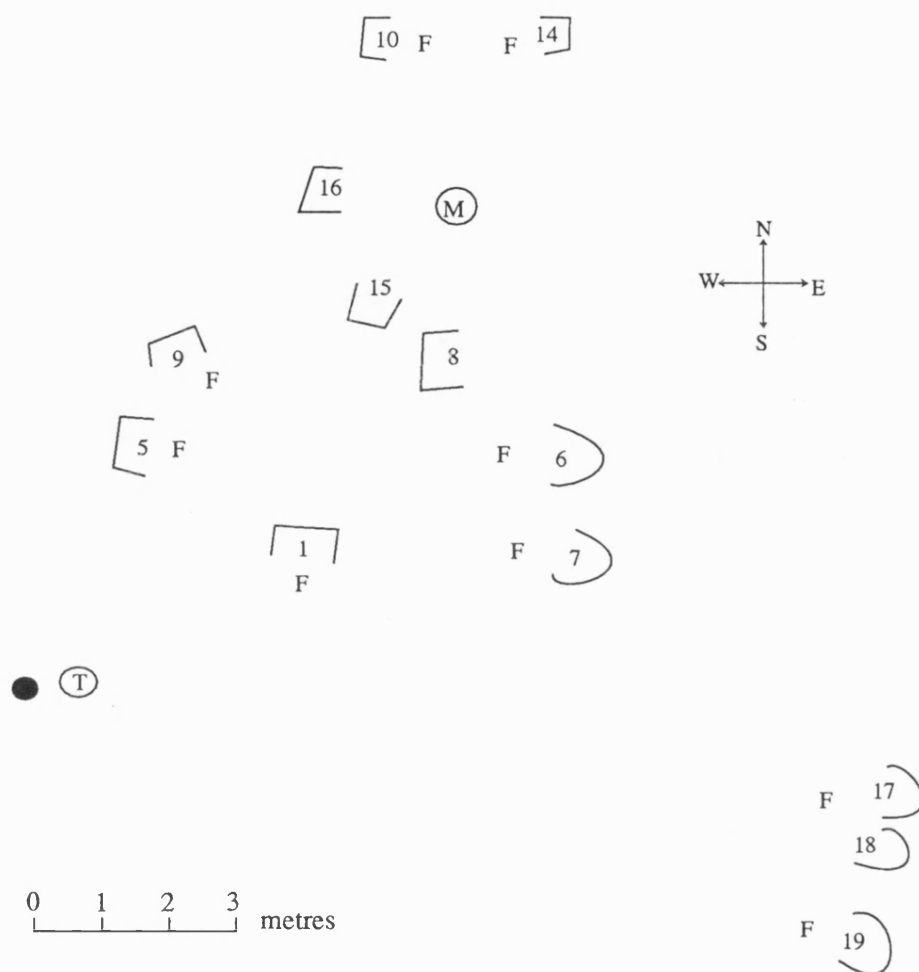


Figure 6.9.2 Giseb camp layout

Are these broad structuring principles still present in the layout of a Hai||om camp recorded more than sixty years later (case 6, see figure 6.9.2)? The hut of the oldest man in the camp (Horoseb, hut 7) is in the east of what may be regarded as an irregular circle (with the huts of unmarried men inside it). However, the huts of late-comers are even further to the east. This is consistent with cases 4, 5, and 8 in which the same old couple occupied the most easterly hut (again, late-comers camped further to the east in case 5). In case 7 the old couple had split temporarily from the ||gâus and !Naredoeb and his wife !Garos took over both the position of eldest couple and the most easterly position for their hut. As in the case of Botos (see above) the east-west axis seems to be relevant in all these different Hai||om settlements. The same feature appears in Herero and Damara settlements (cf.

Barnard 1992:205-7) but not among other "San" groups (cf. Valiente-Noailles 1993:115-22). It is pointless to speculate whether and how this feature has been "introduced" into Hai||om social organization from surrounding agropastoralists since it has apparently been "Hai||om style" to do so for a considerable time. It is, however, meaningful to consider the short-term changes which Fourie's and Lebzelter's ideal-type descriptions cannot account for. For instance, in cases 5 and 6 the *gaikhoeb* may choose to build his hut in the east but he cannot prevent newcomers from building their huts even further to the east, though outside the "circle".

More generally, the ideal-type layouts not only presuppose that the whole local group arrived at a place at the same time, it also presupposes that the position of the *gaikhoeb* is unchanging and remains unchanged no matter what the composition of the local group is like. By contrast, case 6 (figure 6.9.2) suggests that the position of the male *gaikhoeb* is different to that implied in Fourie's and Lebzelter's cases. There is a vague spatial distinction between Horoseb's own family (his wife, his wife's sisters and their families) to the north/right and his (classificatory) sister (hut 1) and cross-cousin (hut 9) to the south/left. But it is not a sharp distinction and it seems unwarranted to take the *gaikhoeb* as point of departure since the *gaikhoes*, his wife, and her two sisters seem to form the "core" of the settlement. Possibly the "patrilocality" found by Fourie (1966[1928]:86) and implied by Lebzelter (1934:84) has changed over time. In any case it seems more appropriate to consider the different perspectives of all residents and not only to follow the perspective of male household heads.

This critique not only applies to ideal-type descriptions of Hai||om settlements but also to those of the Owambo agropastoralists. Figure 6.5 depicts an Owambo homestead adopted from Loeb's drawing (1962:325) based on a description by Brincker. It shows the entrance (1) to palisade passages that lead to interior an *olupale* or meeting place, and further on to the wives' quarters (3), the visitor's hut (4) and the inner quarters of the male head of the homestead (5 and 6). It also shows the cattle corral (6) and the granaries (7). What it does not show is how this particular homestead,

which belonged to the Kwanyama Owambo king Uejulu at the end of the last century, differs from other homesteads. Other ethnographers such as Schinz emphasize that despite diversity of size all homesteads "are based on one and the same plan" although he continues by noting a number of variables that can alter the layout (cf. Schinz 1891:290-2). The ground-plans presented by Delachaux and Thiébaud (n.d.:108-11), Loeb (1948:74-75), Walton (1956:156), and Urquhart (1963:60) all represent "chiefly" homesteads or other special cases that are taken to represent "Owambo style" most clearly and most distinctively with regard to the settlements of neighbouring groups. However, they inadequately represent the diversity of Owambo homesteads not only with regard to modernization tendencies but simply with regard to the status of the homestead owner (whether monogamous or polygamous, rich or poor, with resident in-laws or without, long-established or recently arrived in the area, permanently or intermittently resident, primary or secondary residence). If one compares the homestead of an unmarried or frequently absent Owambo cattle herder with ≠Akhoe settlements north of |Gomais, the differences in terms of outward appearance or layout plan will not be very great.

In sum, ideal-type layouts make fruitful comparisons rather difficult. However, it also needs to be considered whether ground layout or survey-type maps more generally provide a sufficient tool for capturing ongoing changes and other aspects of social practice which influence the spatial structure of a camp.

In all three of the Hai||om examples described above (!Gai≠nas, Botos, ||Khausis), changes have been forced upon the Hai||om which made changes in settlement pattern inevitable. But it is also important to note that these changes involve choices made by the Hai||om who, consciously as well as unconsciously, alter their complex social practices. A practice-oriented theory of everyday space has to be based on a detailed analysis of variations in settlement layouts and has to account for the diversity of individual action in domestic space. Moore is correct in demanding that "[...] some method has to be employed whereby space can be analysed in terms

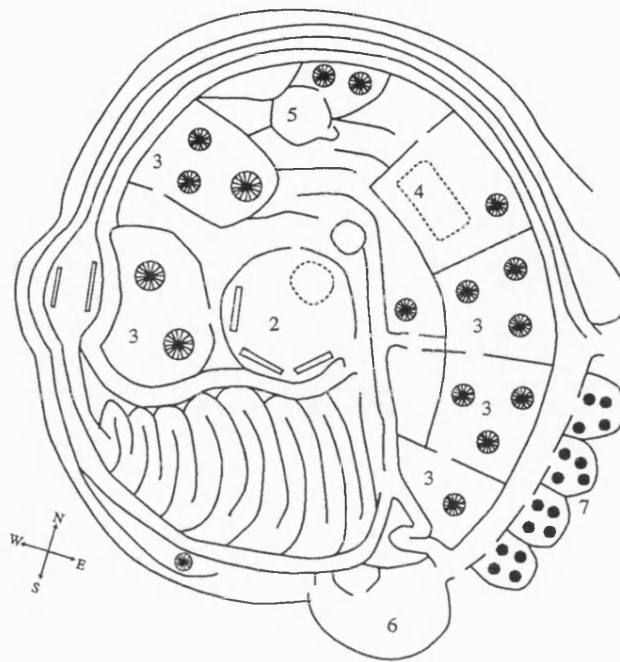


Figure 6.5 Owambo homestead layout according to Loeb

of its invariant physical form and in terms of the interpretations and intentions of actors" (Moore 1986:79) but it is doubtful whether her largely metaphorical borrowing from literary theory can do the job.

The alternative method which I suggest here is based on the work of two architects, Bill Hillier and Julienne Hanson, who not only designed an inductive method for describing spatial arrangements comparatively but who also suggest a new way of conceptualizing the source of diversity in domestic space (cf. Hillier and Hanson 1984). Their theoretical critique is directed against a "biological" understanding of the human ability to interpret, generate, and manipulate domestic space that assumes a "genotypical" centre (a blueprint, an internalized ideal-type) from which the "phenotypes" (i.e. the actual manifestations in everyday life) are derived.³ Their approach is akin to a practice-oriented theory of everyday space in that

³Unfortunately Hillier and Hanson continue to use biological metaphors which, like Moore's literary metaphors, are obstructive rather than illuminating (cf. Hillier and Hanson 1984:44-5).

they deny that there is a culturally transmitted code in the individual that accounts for continuity and diversity within structural limits. They maintain that "consistency in human activity at the social level" is not the product of a given internal blueprint but rather an artefactual pattern, i.e. one that is constructed from the experience of reality itself "which has already been constructed by the activity of man" (Hillier and Hanson 1984:44).

By implication this means that what is culturally transmitted in a social group is not ideal cultural types but ways to derive a pattern from the diversity encountered in everyday life. Therefore we have to pay more attention to the specific spatial arrangements and the way members of social groups replicate or alter these arrangements. But, what is the spatial information that human actors derive from their environment of domestic space which itself is the product of past arrangements? The degree to which social actors have a bird's-eye view of their domestic space seems to vary. As Lévi-Strauss has pointed out, spatial configurations do not always have an obvious relationship with the social organization of the group concerned. In some cases the relation seems to be one of correspondence, in others one of an ideal social model being mapped spatially (cf. Lévi-Strauss 1968[1958]:133-63). Following Hillier and Hanson's terminology we may distinguish between "short models" (providing few prescriptions as to how an individual space may be used) and "long models" (specifying a large number of non-interchangeable elements) (Hillier and Hanson 1991:25-6). These "models" are not necessarily made explicit; they are to be understood as the knowledge people need to live and recreate domestic space. The distinction between long and short models does not correspond to a "complex" or "hierarchical" versus a "simple" or "egalitarian" social organization. The structure of the Bororo village, an example used extensively by Lévi-Strauss, follows a long model since the relations of all huts and spaces in the village are specified (cf. Lévi-Strauss 1968 [1958]: 141-7). The Owambo homesteads are long-model settlements whereas Hai||om camps are short-model settlements. This does not mean that short models are less complex: quite the contrary. They allow more scope in each

individual case so that their structure may be less simple than the conformity of long-model cases. However, layout maps often privilege long-model settlements because they are particularly suited for mapping the individual spaces of a long-model settlement which otherwise remains difficult to visualize. But in order to capture the complexity of short-model settlements it is necessary to develop a new method of mapping space moving away from a bird's-eye view to a spatial pattern that includes the perspective of the social actors as they use domestic space in practice.

The survey maps and ground plans commonly used in ethnographic description and comparison (like those by Fourie and by Loeb) emphasize relative distance and the absolute orientation of huts. These descriptions usually lead to structural comparisons of cultural types (see Walton 1956, Urquhart 1963, Kuper 1980). This method can be complemented by inductively derived "permeability maps" which highlight the spatial properties of a camp as seen from the perspective of a visitor or resident walking through the camp. As Hillier and Hanson have demonstrated, comparisons of settlement layouts can then be made on the basis of the number of steps needed in order to reach one place (or all places) from another (or all others), distinguishing "unipermeable" (one entrance only) from "multi-permeable" places (several ways of access) These can be graphically represented as shown in figure 6.6.

Following Hillier and Hanson (1984) the spatial patterns of permeability maps can be described as "distributed" (or "non-distributed") if most places are connected by many (or few) direct, i.e. independent, routes of access to other places. A distributed structure links places in a ring-like fashion while a non-distributed structure links places in a tree-like fashion (see figure 6.6). These patterns consist of a related distinction, namely that between symmetrical and asymmetrical relations between places. A relation between two places can be described as "symmetrical" if both can be accessed by the same number of steps. If access to one place requires a passage through another place the former space can be said to be controlled by the latter. If the reverse is not true the relation between the two places

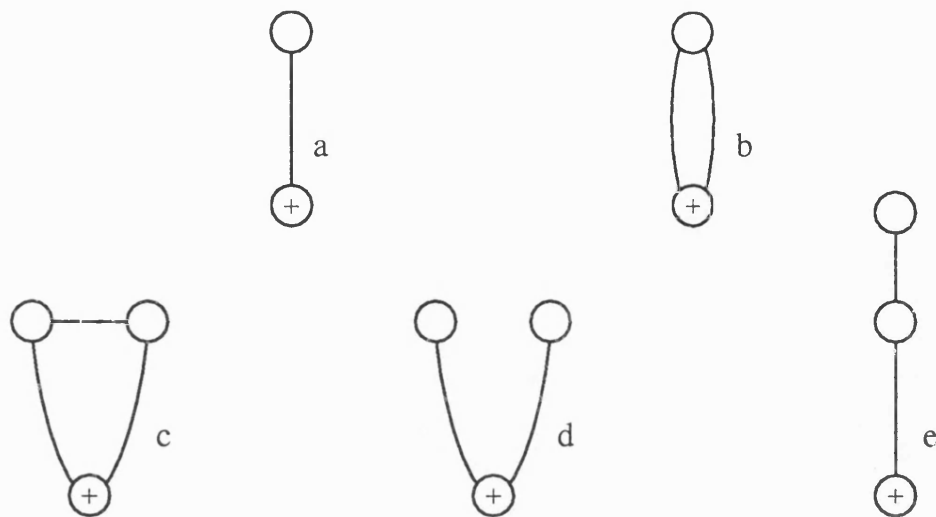


Figure 6.6 Basic spatial relations in permeability maps: a) unipermeable, b) multipermeable (bipermeable), c) distributed, d) non-distributed, e) asymmetrical.

is asymmetrical. In Hillier and Hanson's model these distinctions are the basis for a method of quantitatively comparing the "distributedness" and "symmetry" of complex spaces (such as building estates) (cf. Hillier and Hanson 1984:108-42). But this development of the basic model obscures one important advantage of permeability maps, namely, the fact that a perspectival point has to be chosen in order to use the descriptive terms. In the permeability maps below the perspectival point of a visitor is chosen. But the whole map could be redrawn from any place within the settlement. When all perspectives are taken together this will necessarily lead to a very complex picture in which, for instance, each fireplace needs to be linked by a direct double line with every other fireplace. It will also lead to a complex description of "distributed" and "symmetrical" relationships of two places with regard to many other possible places. In this chapter I use the basic distinction simply to add a new set of distinctive relational properties to that of near/far and to those based on the cardinal direction. For example, - as the figures show - most interior spaces of huts and fireplaces in front of the huts are asymmetrical from the location of a visitor because the interior has to be accessed via the fireplace. The fireplace by contrast can be accessed from various other places and is therefore connected with a double line. In

!Gai~~+~~nas (figure 6.9.1) the place where medicine dances are held is a highly distributed feature of this camp because a large number of routes (namely from each of the fire places) lead to it.

To sum up, the following table gives the most important differences between the two ways of mapping. Both methods are complementary and in most cases survey maps are a necessary first step in the preparation of permeability maps.

Table 6.1 Characteristic features of survey maps and permeability maps

Survey maps	Permeability Maps
-take a bird's-eye view (typically derived from aerial photographs or measured ground plans);	- take the perspective of a visitor or resident dwelling in or walking through the camp;
- define elements as members of a larger class of elements according to size, form and function;	- define elements as either "unipermeable" or "multipermeable" (several ways of access) places;
- distinguish the relation between elements according to their position on a two dimensional grid;	- distinguish the relation between points by the number of steps needed in order to reach one place from another;
- describe and compare structures in terms of relative distance between elements and their absolute orientation to each other.	- describe and compare structures in terms of (non-)distributedness and (a)symmetry, depending on the number of independent routes of access and of neccessary passages.

Using this method it is not only possible to redraw the ground plans of Hai||om and Owambo settlements and to compare their relative "density" from the perspective of a visitor. "Permeability maps" also allow us to see patterns of continuity and transformation between a number of Hai||om camps and to compare these patterns with those of other social groups. Before comparing the permeability maps of three of the diverse Hai||om camps described above, namely !Gai~~+~~nas (figure 6.1.2), Botos (figure 6.2.2),

and ||Khausis (figure 6.3.2), the following section introduces the basic local Hai||om unit, the ||*gâus*, making use of permeability maps.

Continuity in Hai||om Settlement Patterns

The following camp layouts are manifestations of one Hai||om ||*gâus*. A ||*gâus* is the basic unit of Hai||om social organization that defines a group of people with regard to communal residence. As has already been indicated in previous chapters, membership of a ||*gâus* is an important aspect with regard to subsistence and exchange. Basic everyday activities such as visiting, sharing and moving which are constitutive of social relationships involve the concept of ||*gâus*.

||*Gâus* is a fuzzy set since it can associate a number of places in a region with a number of individuals without any critical attributes that would link up all places or all individuals involved. The following permeability maps refer to a ||*gâus* in the ≠Gîseb area, the members of which have changed their place of residence over time resulting in a changing social composition of the ||*gâus*.

This area (see map 1.2) is now the remotest part of the communal area allocated to Owambo agro-pastoralists. The ≠Akhoe regard this land as an integral part of the country which they call ||Goa-aib (see chapter 4) which is prized for its abundance of wild food resources. All five camp sites analyzed below are situated a short distance from a large mangetti grove that stretches from east to west. Along this line the sites are distributed as follows: Omboto, (3km to) Sanika, (7km to) Sanab, (10km to) ≠Gîseb. In presenting the data the chronological sequence of movements has been maintained.

Figure 6.7 ≠Gîseb (dry season 1990)

Figure 6.8 Sanika (wet season 1990/91)

Figure 6.9.1 ≠Gîseb (dry season 1991)

Figure 6.10 Omboto (dry season 1992)

Figure 6.11 Sanab (wet season 1992/93)

As already mentioned, new camps that are established at a place which was occupied at an earlier stage are erected a few hundred metres away from the site previously occupied. In these cases there are no fences and a settlement site is only bounded in the sense that every person clears some ground immediately surrounding his or her grass hut. Since occupants of a single hut in most cases moved together over the period investigated the numbers used to identify huts are also used in the legends of the other maps to indicate the movement of occupants over this period. Numbers are bracketed to indicate individuals previously part of the || *gâus* but not present at the site under consideration.

Legend for all maps:

+ = visitor approaching the camp.

F = individual fire places in front of huts.

T = tree under which blacksmith work is carried out.

M = fireplace for the medicine dance.

A = !*hais* | *ais*, fire for the consumption of hunted meat.

Single line = one one way of access (e.g. entrance to a grass hut).

Double line = several ways of access (e.g. fireplaces or roofs for shade).

Case 4 (figure 6.7)

Camp of the local group at ≠Gîseb during the dry season 1990 (reconstructed in October 1991 on the basis of hut remains and explanations of members of this group).

1 A married couple, | Hauseb (a !*gaiaob*) and || Gorasas (an elder sister to Horoseb).

2 Two unmarried daughters (one of | Hauseb and || Gorasas and one of Doeb and Tsabaies).

3 Thomab, an unmarried young man (son of Doeb and Tsabaies).

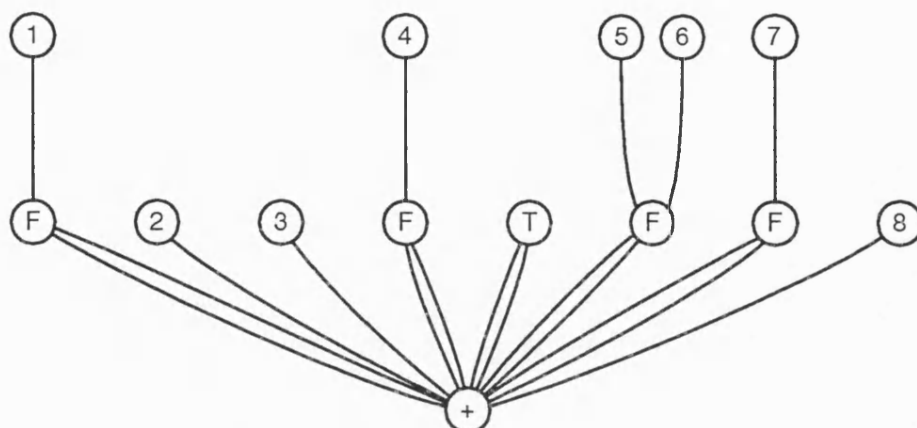


Figure 6.7 Permeability map of ≠Giseb (dry season 1990)

- 4 Doeb and Tsabaies (and two small children).
 5 Tirob, an unmarried young man.
 6 | Gasas, Tirob's mother, a widow (a sister of Hanakabes).
 7 Horoseb and Hanakabes, an elderly married couple.
 8 Abakub, an unmarried young man (child of Horoseb and Hanakabes, parallel cousin and !narekhoeb to Tirob).

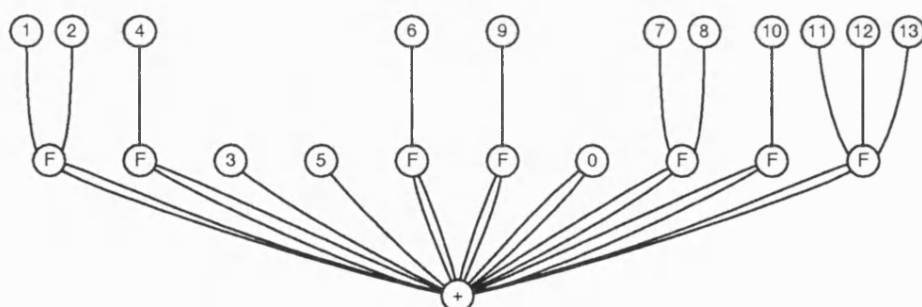


Figure 6.8 Permeability map of Sanika (wet season 1990/91)

Case 5 (figure 6.8)

Camp of the same local group at Sanika, about 17 kilometres west of ≠Giseb, during the wet season 1990/91 (recorded in January 1990).

1,2,4,5,6,7,8 as above.

9 Shortib (a cross-cousin of Horoseb and in the past married to | Gasas, returned from a period of work on the farms near the Omuramba Owambo).
 10 Eliab (a son-in-law of !Naredoeb and !Garos and also in-law to Horoseb and Hanakabes, returned from exile in Angola) and || Ogus, his wife, who stayed at | Gomais during the war where she had married again) and two small children. Newcomers to the camp.

(3 Thomab stayed with local Owambo for work.)

11 Abakub, a visitor from | Gomais (about 80 kilometres to the south).

12 Xareb, a visitor from | Gomais.

13 Tsab, a visitor from Onguti/ | Gomais.

The three visitors are !narekhoen (same surname) to Hanakabes, | Gasas, !Garos, Tirob, and Abakub. All three men have their wives and children at | Gomais but Tsab and his wife are separated.

Case 6 (figure 6.9.1)

Camp of the same local group at ≠Gîseb, about 100 metres west of the previous year's site of the previous year, during the dry season 1991 (recorded in October 1991).

1,5,6,7,8,9,10 as above.

14 !Naredoeb and !Garos (his wife, a sister of Hanakabes and | Gasas) who returned from Fisa, a development scheme on a white farm (about 100 kilometres to the south).

15 Ana|naib, an unmarried son of !Naredoeb and !Garos.

16 Au≡aob, an unmarried son of !Naredoeb and !Garos.

17 Koites visiting from Tsaudom (about 60 kilometres to the south), previously resident at | Gomais. She is widowed, *migi* to | Khomates.

18 A married couple, | Arekub and | Khomates (and small children), visiting from Tsaudom, previously resident at | Gomais. | Arekub is a brother of Nanas.

19 A married couple, Dôanib and Nanas (and five small children), visiting from Tsaudom, previously resident at Fisa and | Gomkhaus (both about 100 kilometres to the south).

(2, 3, 4 moved to Kobases, about 10 kilometres to the east.)

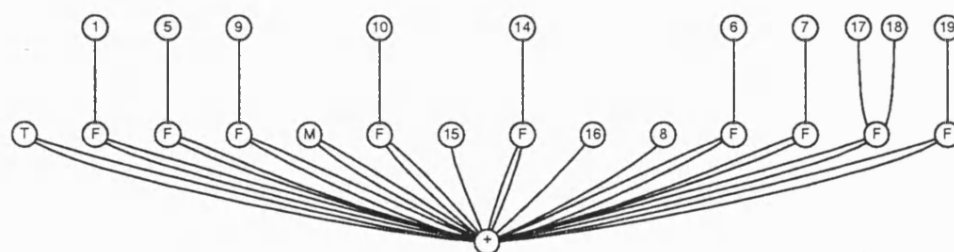


Figure 6.9.1 Permeability map of ≠Gîseb (dry season 1991)

Case 7 (figure 6.10)

Camp of the same group at Omboto, about 20 kilometres west of ≠Gîseb, during the dry season 1992 (reconstructed in March 1993 on the basis of hut remains and explanations given by residents).

9,10,14,15,16,17 as above.

- 1 rejoined the group.
 20 ||Ahes, a visitor from |Gomais, mother of Seib.
 21 A young married couple, Seib and !Khaïos, visitors from Onguti.
 11 Abakub, visiting once more from |Gomais.
 12 Xareb, visiting once more from |Gomais.
 22 Au=aoob, a visitor from |Gomais.
 23 ≠Kharirobes and her husband (a son of Koïtes) and a child, visiting from Etemba.
 24 Hokorob and !Naredoes (a sister of ≠Kharirobes) and a child, visiting from Etemba.
 25 !Uxuwis (mother of ≠Kharirobes and !Naredoes), visiting from Etemba.
 26 A married couple Koreseb and ||Guinaxus (a sister of !Uxuwis), visiting from Etemba.
 (5, 7 moved to a place called Mondes, about 12 kilometres to the north).
 (8 moved to Kobases in order to marry the daughter of Doeb, see 4 above.)
 (18 returned to Tsaudom with occasional visits to |Gomais.)
 (19 returned to |Gomkhaus.)

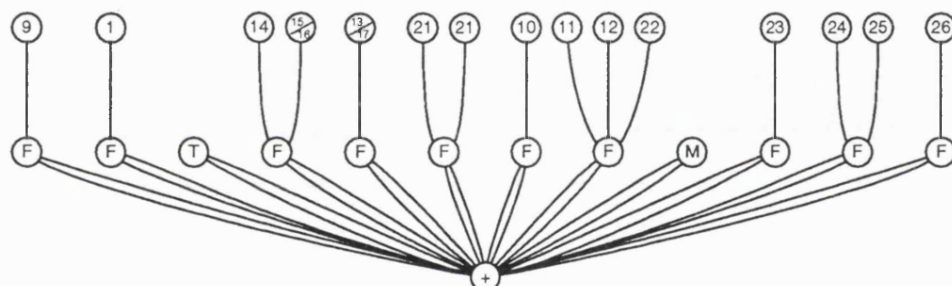


Figure 6.10 Permeability map of Omboto (dry season 1992)

Case 8 (figure 6.11)

Camp of the same group at Sanab, about halfway between ≠Gîseb and Omboto, during the late dry season 1992 (reconstructed in March 1993 on the basis of hut remains and explanations given by residents).

- 1,6,9,10,14,15,16,24 as above.
 5, 7 rejoined the group.
 8 is visiting.
 (11,12,22,20 returned to |Gomais.)
 (21,23, 25 moved on to |Gomais.)
 (26 moved to Omxahe, about 25 kilometres to the northwest.)

The Hai||om ||gâus as described with the help of these cases is characterized by considerable fluctuation of members and repeated moves between different sites. Hut styles also differ in these examples. Windshields

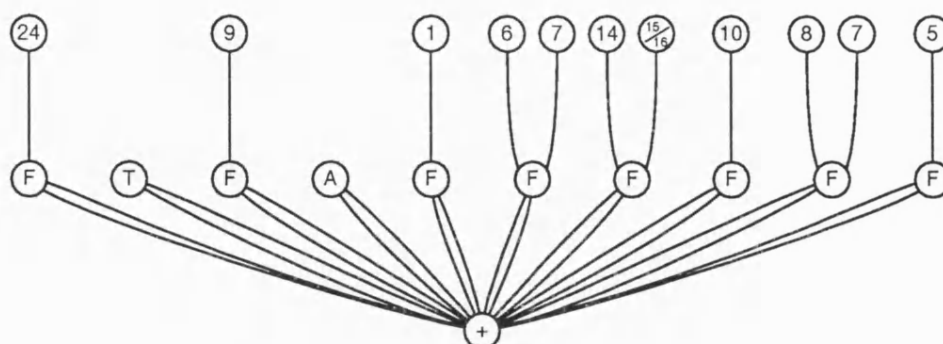


Figure 6.11 Permeability map of Sanab (wet season 1992/93)

and grass huts are used in case 4, Owambo-style huts in case 5, grass huts and square huts with wooden poles in case 6, grass huts in case 7, and in camp 8 grass huts that were gradually replaced by Owambo-style huts. The factors that lead to a particular style of hut being used are season, availability of building materials, and the expected time to be spent at a place. The Owambo-style huts at the Sanika camp, for instance, were deserted after a conflict over water with the local Owambo. However, across all these different cases the different hut styles seem not to have altered the permeability map of the camps in any fundamental way.

There are a number of elements of continuation in the emerging spatial pattern which I want to point out with reference to the social practices of joining a *||gâus*, and of sharing and visiting within a *||gâus*. In all cases mapped above the spatial arena created is one characterized by a high degree of permeability given the low number of steps needed to reach another place from anywhere within or indeed from outside the camp. Any new hut added to the existing camp has the same properties as the huts already established in terms of permeability and control.⁴

There is high symmetry between individual dwelling places, i.e. no individual hut stands out or has a "thicker" boundary than any of the others. The camp at Omboto as recorded in the dry season of 1992 came into being

⁴Control in this context refers to an asymmetrical spatial arrangement in the sense that a space through which one has to pass in order to reach another place can be said to "control" the access to that space. In the Hai||om case fireplaces "control" access to the interior of huts.

in successive stages as people arrived in smaller groups over several weeks. The arrangement of huts gave no clue as to who had arrived earlier and who had come later.

The permeability of the camps also bears on and is reinforced by the sharing practices between neighbouring fire places. For instance, at the †Gîseb site during the 1991 dry season Tirob, who had a number of underground storages where he kept *!no* fruits to ripen more quickly, returned to the camp with twenty-five fruits which he divided up and shared with all residents except those who had their own ground storage place. On the same day after sunset Shortib returned to the camp with a small antelope which was shared among the men that gather at his fireplace. Some pieces found their way to the women sitting in front of their own huts. While limited individual rights over assets exist (e.g. the *!no* storages) and in some cases privileged rights (for men with regard to meat), the arena for sharing is the whole ||*gâus*. Hunting returns and other food brought into the camp cannot be hidden, but consumption of gathered fruit takes place in a decentralized fashion at the many individual fireplaces in the camp.⁵ Characteristically, it is the young unmarried men and adolescent boys who do not have their own fireplaces. More often than other members of the ||*gâus*, boys and young men are visiting other fireplaces or other camps and sharing a meal either with their parents or with each other. Furthermore, it is expected that they will leave the ||*gâus* in order to find a partner or as soon as they have found a marriage partner.

There is a marked difference between fireplaces and the hut interior both in terms of "distributedness" and "symmetry". While the fireplace is accessible from various directions, and from all other fireplaces, access to the interior of a hut is controlled by the fireplace as the permanent dwelling place. This feature of spatial arrangements in a ||*gâus* corresponds to the

⁵Residents not only share food but they also use the same water source. They also cooperate in other fields, for instance, in medicine dances performed in the camp. The parallel between food-sharing and ritual cooperation will be explored in more detail in the following chapter.

Hai||om greeting routines mentioned in the previous chapter whereby the residents take the initiative in greeting. Individual autonomy in control over private space is further embodied in the practice that visitors only approach fireplaces some distance from the hut but do not approach huts directly unless invited to do so. Visiting Sanika in early 1991 we walked into the camp passing some of the huts without taking notice of the people apparently resting inside, and squatted down some distance from a hut where a fire was burning. Horoseb was sitting at the entrance on the other side of his hut, carving an arrow. After we had all squatted in a half-circle around the fire, he got up and we shook hands. He then sat down and greeted us one after the other. Slowly the other people who were present in the camp come out of their huts and greeted us the same way. Those residents who arrived later from a gathering trip first walked by to deposit their loads and then returned to greet us while we remained seated at the fire.

There are structural similarities between these camps which emerge from permeability maps and which correspond to the everyday practices of visiting or joining a camp and sharing within a camp. The social actors involved have various backgrounds with regard to the kinds of settlements in which they have stayed before (commercial farms, Owambo settlements, large service centres). But as long as the political and economic conditions of these other settlements do not affect the location in question and its routine social practices, the settlement layout seems to be reproduced over time and across sites despite changes in social composition. The following section will investigate what happens to the characteristic permeability features of a ||gâus in a changing socio-economic environment.

Transformations of Settlement Layouts in Different Contexts

Before presenting the permeability maps of the three settlements described above (cases 1-3) it is useful to summarize the socio-economic environment of each of the settlements discussed.

!Gai~~+~~nas is in the Owambo communal area but a considerable distance from agropastoralist homesteads with which little economic cooperation takes place outside the wet (gardening) season. The grass huts of non-permanent camps during the dry season are made within a couple of hours to last for the few months of settlement. There are no fences but use is made of the natural distribution of bushes and trees so that a limited number of footpaths link the camp with the waterhole, a mangetti grove, and neighbouring settlements. All footpaths lead to the camp's central open place with a shade tree and the fire places for the medicine trance dance. The camp is regarded as one ||*gâus* (local "band").

Botos is half a day's walk from !Gai~~+~~nas, situated in the direct vicinity of several agropastoralist settlements. In the Hai||om camp of Botos most huts are built in Owambo style (a wooden hut with a thatched grass roof) and the settlement is on the edge of a large cleared area surrounded by fences made of branches or barriers to protect huts and gardens from grazing cattle. There are two clusters of huts within view and easy reach of each other. Because of this and despite the fact that the social composition of !Gai~~+~~nas and Botos is almost identical, Botos is often described as consisting of two ||*gâute* (here: "hearth groups") rather than one.

Finally, ||Khausis, a commercial farm, is owned by a white farmer who has allocated a plot for his workers to build their huts on. Building materials consist of corrugated iron, wood, and - for the workers of long residence - stone. Each house has a fenced garden and an enclosed inner yard (called *hos*). Each occupied house is regarded as a separate ||*gâus* (here: core family).

Case 1: Permeability map of !Gai~~+~~nas (as recorded in dry season 1991) (figure 6.1.2, see also figure 6.1.1).

- + = visitor approaching the camp.
- M = fires for the medicine trance dance.
- F = individual fire place.
- 1 shade windshield.

- 2 grass hut of a widowed old woman.
- 3 grass hut of a single woman (her sons are in hut 4 and 5).
- 4 shelter of unmarried adolescent boys.
- 5 shelter of young couple with small child.
- 6 shade roof for mother and child of hut 5 but also used by the mother's visiting parents.
- 7 grass hut of a middle-aged pregnant woman.
- 8 open sleeping place of her husband and small children.
- 9 grass hut of a widowed old woman.
- 10 grass hut of her son and his wife.
- 11 grass hut of their unmarried girls.
- 12 grass hut of a married daughter and her husband.
- 13 their shade roof.

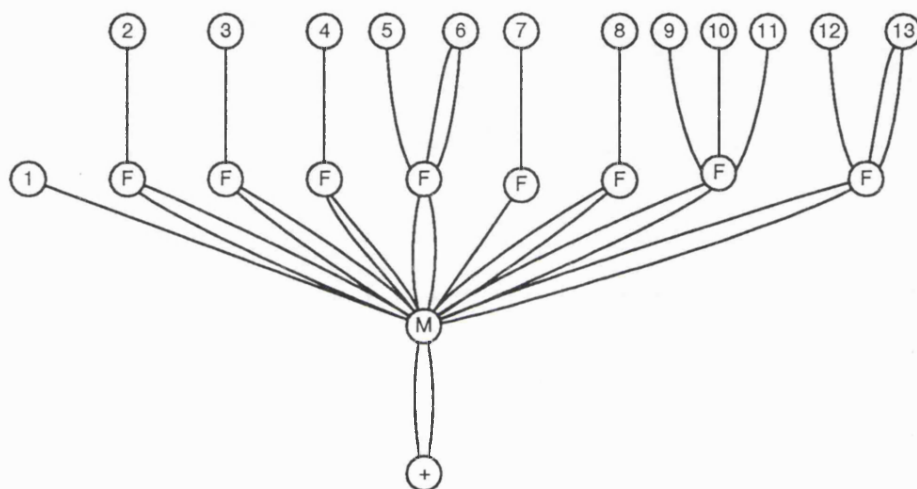


Figure 6.1.2 !Gai-nas permeability map

Case 2: Botos (recorded rainy season 1991) (figure 6.2.2, see also figure 6.2.1).

+ = visitor approaching the camp.

P = passage to enter enclosure.

G = gate to enter field.

O = *olupare/hos*.

1 dwelling place under a shade tree also used for woodcarving, pounding millet.

2 Owambo-style hut of a widowed man.

3 grass hut of a young couple.

4 hut made of mahangu stalks for unmarried boys.

5 Owambo-style hut of a widowed woman.

6 Owambo-style hut of a widowed old woman.

7 shade roof.

- 8 Owambo-style hut of a middle-aged man, his wife and young children (a son of the man in hut 2).
- 9 Owambo-style hut of a middle-aged man, his wife and young children (a son of the woman in hut 12).
- 10 hut for clothes, tools and used as a shade roof.
- 11 visitors' hut made of mahangu stalks.
- 12 Owambo-style hut of a widowed old woman.
- 13 Owambo-style hut of a daughter of the man in hut 9 and her brideservice paying husband.

Case 3: ||Khausis (recorded in rainy season 1992) (figure 6.3.2, see also figure 6.3.1).

+ = visitor approaching the camp.

P = passage.

H = *hos/olupare* (place for receiving visitors and cooking-fire).

W = water sources/wash houses.

1-5 rooms (including porch) of a worker's stone house occupied by the worker (18 years service), his wife and young children.

6-10 rooms (including porch) of a worker's stone house, occupied by the worker (7 years service), his wife and children.

11-15 rooms of a worker's corrugated iron hut occupied by the worker (13 years service), his wife and children.

16 old hut, currently occupied by a widowed temporary worker.

17 corrugated iron hut of a young worker (2 years service) and his wife.

18 old hut, currently occupied by a single Owambo worker.

19-21 rooms of a worker's corrugated iron hut occupied by the worker (19 years service), his wife and children (including children of siblings).

22-23 a corrugated iron hut (two rooms) occupied by a worker (6 years service), his wife and children.

24-25 rooms of a corrugated iron hut occupied by a former worker (now pensioner) and his wife.

27-31 rooms of a worker's corrugated iron hut occupied by the worker (8 years service) and his wife.

32-33 old corrugated iron hut (two rooms), taken over by a worker (6 months service) and his wife and children.

34-36 rooms of a worker's corrugated iron hut occupied by the worker (6 years service) and his wife.

37-38 corrugated iron hut (two rooms) of a worker (7 years service) currently without wife.

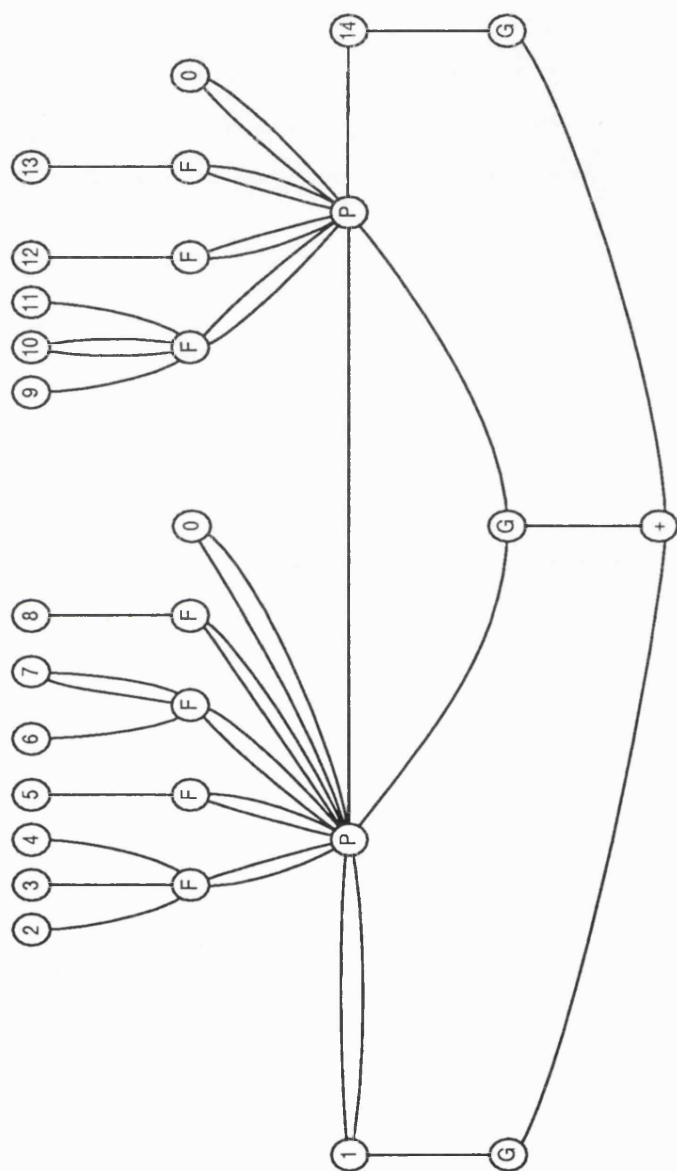


Figure 6.2.2 Botos permeability map

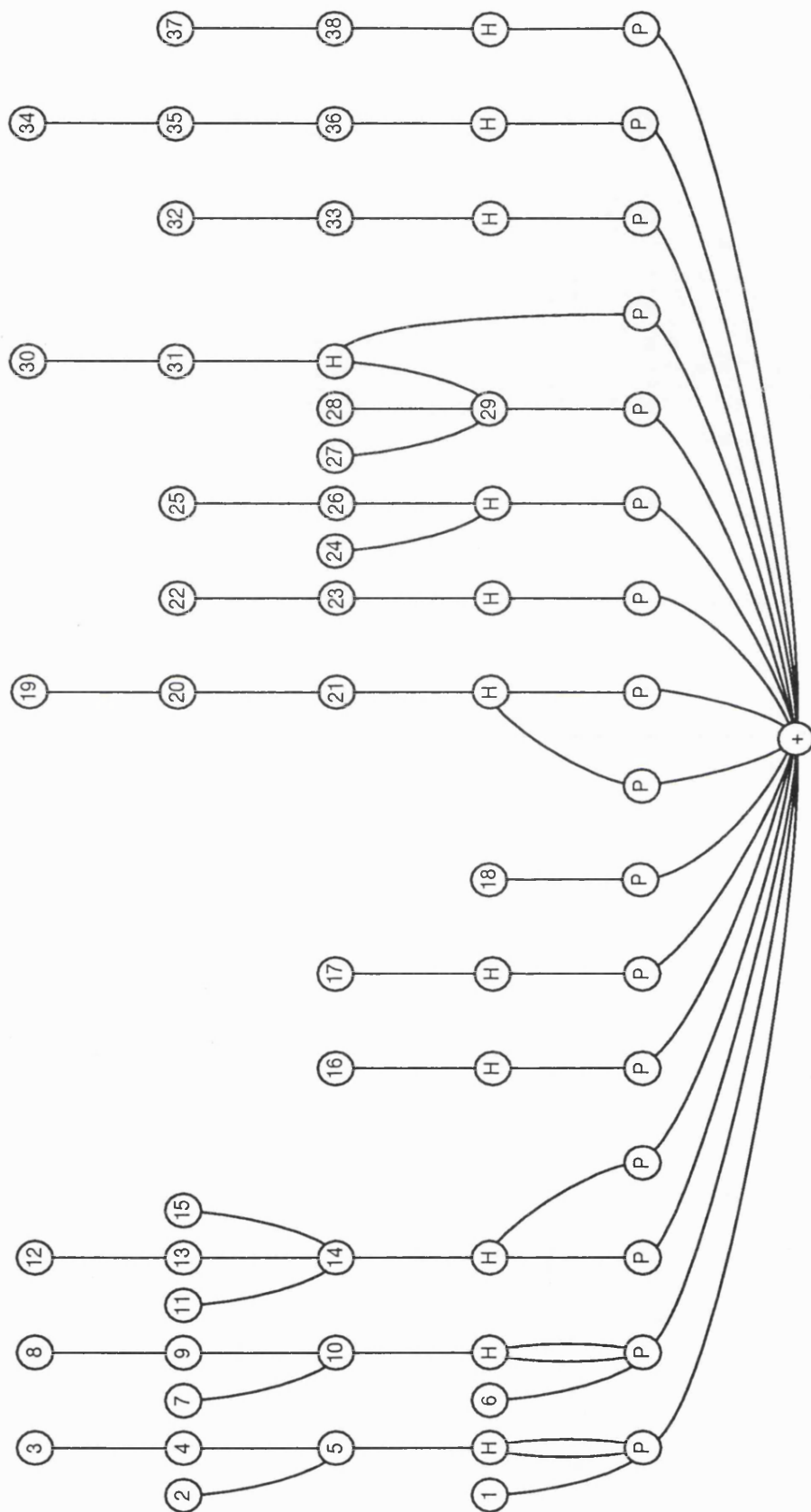


Figure 6.3.2 ||Khausis permeability map

Before analyzing the apparent differences between the three maps it should be pointed out that there are continuities and that not all potentially possible spatial patterns are realized. For example, in none of the cases do places occupied by one person, a couple or a core family "control" the place of another person, couple or core family. That is to say, no person has to cross the personal space of someone else in order to reach his or her hut. By contrast, this is a common feature of complex Owambo homesteads (see Hillier and Hanson 1984:164-5) and this also applies to the situation of Hai||om living in Owambo homesteads. In all three cases distributedness is generally low. At !Gai=nas it is only relatively high, since the open space between huts allows direct access to all fireplaces. There are no complicated links such as the palisade pathways in a chiefly Owambo homestead or such as the "private ways" in an Ashanti palace (Hillier and Hanson 1984:170).

An analysis of differences between the three permeability maps that includes the socio-economic context, the prevalent practice features, and the emic categories is summarized in table 6.2. The spatial "arenas" have been examined in terms of their links with the underlying location (the social organization, the semiotic system and the political economy) and with the constitutive situational settings (everyday activities) including practices of "visiting", "sharing", and "joining a group". In the remainder of this chapter I will describe these three practices in turn examining the transformations they undergo across the three case studies.

A comparison shows that according to the definitions given above the "distributedness" of the settlements decreases while "asymmetry" increases. In the farm setting there is a high number of places that are by necessity accessed through another place (but not vice versa). That is to say, the number of asymmetrical relations increases. The overall space pattern becomes more "distributed" moving from the dry season camp to Botos and further to ||Khausis. In less formal terms this means that the boundaries "thickens" progressively when moving from the non-permanent dry season camp to the semi-permanent wet (gardening) season camp and finally to the permanent wage labour settlement. This is true with regard to the external

Location	Spatial Features	Practice Features			Emic Description
	Distributedness / Symmetry	Visitor stops at	Daily food (excluding meat) shared among	Newcomers accommodated	
Camp 1 subsistence-foraging camp during dry season	overall high, but less so on the level of hut interiors	fire place in front of individual huts waiting to be greeted by occupants	individuals co-present at individual fire & by neighbouring kin	in quickly built grasshuts or at separate new fireplaces (short & long term)	one "//gäus" (local band)
Camp 2 near agropastoralist settlement during crop season	medium but higher within a cluster of huts	communal "olupare/hos" (visitor's fire) waiting to be approached by residents	group working in the field, according to kin obligations	in huts vacated for visitors (short term), in separate cluster (long term)	variably as one "//gäus" or two "//gäute" (hearth group)
Camp 3 for wage labourers on a commercial farm	generally low on all levels, lowest for long-term workers	entrance to individual "hos" (front yard) after greeting	dependents of a worker in the same house	in room within the house (short term), in own house (long term)	many "//gäute" (each house being one)

Table 6.2 A comparison of Hai||om settlement layouts

boundary, separating the settlement from its "environment", and with regard to the internal boundaries that separate individual living quarters on one hand and dwelling places and fireplaces on the other hand. Internally, the number of steps required by a resident to reach his or her neighbours increases so that the isolation of individuals and core families increases and becomes particularly marked in the case of the commercial farm. This transformation has repercussions in the different sharing practices that have developed in these three settlements. And, at least in part, the spatial pattern is a product of changing sharing practices.

At !Gai¹nas food is gathered communally or individually by all members of the camp but it is also widely shared. Wild fruit and vegetables are mostly processed and consumed individually or with close relatives (children, marriage partner) but always in the open space between huts. People spend most of their time in front of their huts or those of close neighbours. Individual huts are the preferred rest places during the midday heat. After spending the evening at their fireplaces people retire to their sleeping quarters taking some burning sticks from these fires with them which continue to give light and warmth for some time. Adults only enter their own huts, while children are fairly unrestricted as to which huts they go into.

When visiting Botos we found the residents involved in a number of different economic pursuits. Some worked in the fields of the nearest Owambo and were provided cooked food or locally brewed beer at the end of the day. One man was working on a wooden mortar which he later delivered to an Owambo who had promised to give him money for it. He had little to eat until the mortar was finished and payment was received. An elderly man cut grass to exchange it for food. Another man spent the day gathering mangettis which he consumed with his wife and children. The food returns from these diverse economic activities were consumed separately unless the whole group was engaged in communal gardening work and paid with a communal meal.

At ||Khausis at the end of the working day food is bought at the farm

store and cooked and consumed by each core family at the individual *hos*. Since the *hos* and its cooking place are enclosed by a palisade fence, even neighbours do not know whether and what a family is cooking. Individuals who for whatever reason do not budget their income and food adequately sometimes try to get food from their neighbours. However, they are often not successful when trying to get near the hearth of their neighbours and their sharing demands are likely to be turned down.

In all cases, including case one, access to individual dwelling places (i.e. the interior of huts) is restricted and hearths where sharing takes place are also individualized. In cases one and two these individual zones are complemented by communal places (separate cooking fires for men, a visitors' fire, communal fires for the medicine dance). In case two there are at least two separate possible sites for medicine dances and for men to share hunted meat (two *olupare*) while in case three all resting areas (*hos*) are individualized. As far as I know medicine dances have not taken place at ||Khausis in recent years. But a visiting medicine man, just as any other visitor, will stay at one particular house with one particular family.

Since indiscriminate sharing takes place localized at the hearth, an increasing effort has to be made before visiting and sharing takes place. Thus, in all three cases a high degree of individuality characterizes economic activity in the settlement but it is the "thickness" of internal boundaries and the number of links between places that differ.

Pace Hillier and Hanson it is not the case that one settlement type goes together with one society with a certain mode of social solidarity since members of the same social group may seasonally or within their lifetime switch between settlement types and modes of social solidarity (cf. Hillier and Hanson 1984:22). However, the permeability maps do show the immediate influence of changing economic conditions on the space pattern of settlements.

The fact that there are few special-purpose huts (for tools, particular professional activities, or particular visitors) at !Gai~~+~~nas, and therefore a fairly "symmetrical" pattern consisting of places with very similar relations

to each other, is a consequence of its temporary character as a seasonal gathering camp. Possessions are few and the effort put into the construction of huts is minimal.

The fact that the huts at Botos are situated in millet fields and fenced against cattle produces a more "distributed" setup, especially when seen from a visitor's perspective. The spatial effects are there notwithstanding the fact that the residents' own cattle and their own field may add little to their diet in quantitative terms. On the permeability map the *olupare*, which also serves as the fireplace for medicine dances, is no longer the centre of a circle but the branch of a tree.

Finally, through prolonged service at a farm like ||Khausis, workers gain better access to building materials. This enables them to build bigger houses with more rooms and passages which create an increased "tree-like" domestic space pattern. Furthermore, there is pressure from the white farmer to adopt European standards of "proper housing", i.e. single-family houses with single-purpose rooms.

The transformation of settlement permeability is also salient from the perspective of a visitor who, in the approach to the camp and its residents, encounters spaces with different degrees of density. Hillier and Hanson, as European architects, only recognize inanimate spatial boundaries such as walls and passages. Any detailed study of "San" camp life, by contrast, will soon show that not only huts and fire places but also the presence or absence of a visitor/resident and the conventional movements of the human body create boundaries (cf. Sugawara 1988, 1990).

At !Gai~~+~~nas the grass huts are close together covering a cleared space of no more than 10 metres in diameter. Everyone is within sight and hearing of everyone else but residents also visit each other's fire places. Visiting takes also place between !Gai~~+~~nas and another Hai||om ||*gâus* at this waterhole some 400 metres away. Any visitor to the camp may approach any of the fireplaces from either side. Only the entrance to the hut of a pregnant woman who is about to give birth is shielded by bushes so that only one route of access is possible. But a fireplace will only be approached

if it is occupied. If not, a more distant place will be selected.

When Hai ||om visitors come to Botos they take a seat at the enclosed fireplace (called *hos* or *olupare*) or at the daytime dwelling places and wait to be greeted. The *olupare*, like its Owambo counterpart, consists of a row of palisades at the western side as protection against the hot afternoon sun. When visitors are met outside the camp they may be taken to the *olupare* or to one of the other fireplaces, depending on who is present in the camp. In the hot, shadeless season a hut is vacated to function as a reception place for visitors and as a general dwelling place.

At ||Khausis a potential visitor must be accepted as a close relative by one of the workers or the farmer will not allow him or her to stay overnight. When we arrived at ||Khausis during the day we found many huts and often even the yard (*hos*) locked and inaccessible since the men were working and women are visiting elsewhere. Even if unlocked it is not regarded as proper behaviour for anyone to enter the *hos* unless there is someone present. In the evenings and at weekends the occupant of a hut decides whether he or she will admit the visitors from neighbouring farms into the *hos* further into the house or even into the inner quarters. This can be signalled clearly with one's own body and voice responding by positively or negatively to an approaching visitor or by simply ignoring a call and hiding inside.

Thus a visitor is stopped at the fire in front of a hut (in case one), at the camp's *olupare/hos* or day-time dwelling place (in case two), at the front gate to an individual *hos* (in case three). However, the movement of visitors is not only limited by inanimate walls or by individual rules. As we have seen, the physical presence or absence and the movement of residents are important factors. But a definition of society as adopted by Hillier and Hanson obscures that there is more to it than that. Hillier and Hanson regard society as a relation between "physical events" and the "structures of the brains of individuals" (Hillier and Hanson 1984:207, see Lefebvre 1991 [1974]). Body movement is guided by social practices and by socially shared attitudes about bodily proximity. Not only the definition of spatial units such



Plate 6.3 The huts and adjacent gardens of farm workers at ||Khausis, wet season. Women's "washing huts" in the foreground.



Plate 6.4 Hai||om women making a grass hut (Ovambo-style huts in the background).

as ||gâus but also ~~the~~ the very distinction between visitor and resident is variable according to social negotiation. It is less sharply drawn in the dry season camp than in the other two cases. At the commercial farm, by contrast, the position of a "visitor" is more clearly marked than other social positions such as being "not yet married", "an in-law", "a brideservice-paying youngster", "a pregnant woman", which are not as easily discernible (as in case one and case two) from the kind and position of the hut occupied. Since length of residence matters so much in the farm setting there is a sense of being "more resident" than others which does not appear in cases one and two.

Pace Hillier and Hanson the distinction between "insider" and "outsider" is not universal in the sense of a neutral concept that would apply equally to such diverse "premises" as an Owambo homestead, a Hai||om camp or an English cottage (see Hillier and Hanson 1984:147-75). In the Hai||om context a "place" (!as) can be any point in space whether inhabited or not. "Visiting a different place" may refer to a different settlement (as in case one) or to a unit within such a settlement (as in case two and case three). The "fact of the boundary" (Hillier and Hanson 1984:144) cannot be studied on purely spatial grounds. Behavioural definitions of boundaries (such as the control of residents over visitors in the ≠Akhoe greeting routine) have to be considered in conjunction with conceptual definitions of residential units.

Transformations in the definition of the ||gâus, the prime Hai||om residential unit, also become apparent when comparing the ways in which newcomers are accommodated in the three camps. The Hai||om living at two separate sites at Botos arrived at different times but share a camp at !Gai≡nas. An elderly couple which returned from an extended visit first used a shade windshield as their sleeping place but intended to build their own grass hut in any part of the camp. All band members participated in the medicine dance, for which fireplaces and a dance place were cleared at the centre of the camp.

For overnight visitors at Botos one of the huts may be vacated as

close family members move together. When residents stay away for a longer period, especially during the dry season, they close their huts with a thorn branch. The hut and, if all residents move, the camp are considered occupied and no one else would settle there. Men who marry into the local group or other individual close relatives build their own hut within one of the two existing enclosures. I was told that, if a whole family were to join, they would have to clear their own garden and make their own enclosure.

Long term visitors are only allowed on a farm like ||Khausis when they are working. In this case they are given an unoccupied hut to stay in or, if they stay for longer, they are provided with their own hut or time and material to build a new hut. At ||Khausis it is only workers with many years of service who are given stone houses by the farmer.

With regard to the permeability maps the duration of stay is not easily discernible in case one whereas length of residence is a major factor influencing the permeability structure of the commercial farm settlement. In practice there are no limitations for unmarked extensions to the camp in case one while extensions to camp in case two are controlled to some degree by the existing layout and by earlier residents. In case three control over any extension lies in principle with the white farmer and not with the residents although a farmer will in practice often be led by the social pressure and conflict that may arise among their workers.

In sum, the increasing separation of "insiders" and "outsiders" is also followed in the descriptions by the social actors. While the camp in case one is regarded as one unified ||*gâus*, uncertainty of ||*gâus* ascription indicates emerging splits in case two and the fragmentation into numerous ||*gâute* is taken for granted on the commercial farm in case three.

So far I have relied on a preliminary gloss of ||*gâus* as "residential unit" or "camp". Strictly speaking, however, both place and composition are variable. The ||*gâus* is more than a camp at a particular location and it is more than the unit of individuals it creates at any point in time. In hunter-gatherer studies the term used for this kind of social grouping is "band". If "band" is a useful concept, the notion of ||*gâus* is its closest Hai||om

equivalent. Guenther has put much emphasis on the continuity and the resilience of "San" band structure and has at the same time argued that the "Bushman" band "bordering [...] on the amorphousness" cannot be given a clear-cut definition (cf. Guenther 1986c:152). If this argument is accepted then, by implication, continuity of social relationships in "Bushman" society must remain vague. But, do flexible objects require vague descriptions?

The alternative solution, hinted at by Sugawara (1988), is to rethink the "object" of our description. According to Sugawara "the band exists not in the domain of objective entity, but in the domain of inter-subjective consensus" (Sugawara 1988:206). As we have seen, the ||*gâus* is not a stable relation between a social group and a place. The transformations of domestic space as outlined above cast doubt on whether a substantive definition of "band" can be maintained. The term ||*gâus* is used to refer to a whole camp in one case, the dwelling sites or agglomeration of huts in another case, and to individual houses in the last case. The category is consequentially applied to indicate the residents with whom sharing is envisaged. This suggests that at least for these cases of changing economic situations the notion of band or ||*gâus* is not an "objective" but a constructed notion, based on inter-subjective consensus.

In the abstract it could be defined, as Sugawara suggests, as embracing all people with whom a person is prepared to share domestic space (see Sugawara 1988:206). But, concretely, more than individual cognitive "recognition" is involved. The preparedness to share domestic space is stimulated and communicated by frequent and prolonged visiting, the sharing of food, the cooperation in medicine dances and similar "objective" features. Furthermore, the actual shape of domestic space also plays an important role. A settlement without much contact between dwelling and food-sharing locations, such as ||Khausis, or with two separate marked fireplaces, such as Botos, alter the parameters of what it means to recognize someone as a co-resident. The consensus that needs to be negotiated is not only one of whether co-residency is realized but also what kind of co-residence is achieved and what this entails. A pragmatic

definition of the *||gâus* as a band-like category would therefore read as follows: "The range of people who visibly recognize, foster, and manage their relation as potential co-residents by using a range of socially defined interaction styles."

Conclusion

Everyday "lived-in" space differs from notions of space as a neutral, featureless ground. The ways in which people move and in which they position huts, fire places and other features generate the environment for ongoing social interaction. Depending on how and by whom domestic space is occupied, allocated, divided, and structured in everyday activities, the spatial environment can be said to have a relative permeability and density for the people who dwell and move in it. This permeability can be shown particularly well in maps that go beyond the bird's-eye view of a survey map by foregrounding the perspective of a resident or visitor to the settlement.

As among many other hunter-gatherer groups, the everyday space of many Hai||om in northern Namibia consists of seasonally shifting camps that are flexible in their social composition. Despite this flexibility a Hai||om *||gâus* in this context has characteristic permeability features. Access to and from the various huts in a camp as well as to the camp as a whole is facilitated through high permeability and symmetry. There is, however, a constant setting apart of the interior of a hut from the rest of the camp.

The permeability maps also give a better picture of the flexibility in Hai||om settlement patterns under changing socio-economic conditions. The diverse forms of settlement do not seem to be the product of separate models or blueprints. Rather, they are fashioned by an interplay of the location of a camp, the individual and group activities carried out in a settlement, and the kind of spatial arena provided by settlement forms that already exist. The Hai||om *||gâus*, characterized by high internal

permeability, is redefined as the spatial arena changes in which it is located.

Thus, in sum, a Hai||om social style is apparent with regard to the usage of domestic space which is reproduced across time, place and social composition. At the same time, the case studies show great flexibility in adapting to new economic conditions with regard to the size and composition of a settlement, the time span of occupation, and the construction and inventory of houses. And the spatial arrangements produced under the influence of changing conditions and changing everyday social practices in turn influence the definition of social relations within a settlement, the definition of a residential social unit and the definition of the boundaries separating local groups.

Chapter Seven

Ritual and Demand Cooperation

Introduction

So far I have discussed Hai||om social relationships with regard to mixed subsistence strategies (chapter two), modes of transaction (chapter three), the classification of land and its resources (chapter four), language pragmatics (chapter five), and local group composition (chapter six). In all these instances the informal and negotiated character of Hai||om social relationships has been demonstrated. In this chapter Hai||om religious practices are discussed not only because they constitute an important field of Hai||om everyday life but also because, as rituals, that is, formalized and socially shared activities, they may sustain institutionalized practices including the distribution of power and resources, and the moral foundation of cooperative behaviour. Furthermore, given their formalization, rituals may exhibit some characteristics of the long-term relations between Hai||om and their neighbours. Hai||om rituals such as initiation, the medicine or trance dance, and funerals comprise the more "tangible" features of institutions: they consist of a series of events, easily identifiable in time and space, with clearly distinguished roles, activities and paraphernalia. The three major Hai||om rituals analyzed in this chapter all contain a number of elements that reoccur in every instance and which allow us to speak of them as "rituals".

Funeral Rites

As the following cases indicate, Hai||om deal with death and the dead by relying on a complex of beliefs and of ritual practices that are almost

identical in each of the observed instances. Hai || om show concern about the possibility that the deceased may not die a good "cool" death that leads them to *!Khub* (God) but that they may instead do harm to the living.

Case 1

At the grave, participants took water from a bottle and sprinkled it onto the footend of the grave (to the west). Returning to the huts the men wash their hands but some, like Dadab, make extensive use of the water, washing their face, as well. The place in the hut where the body was lying is wet. (Fieldnotes F72, 10.3.91)

Case 2

As soon as the body is taken out of the hut, water is poured on the place where it was lying. Another tin of water is taken along to the graveyard. While the men start to shovel earth into the grave, the women sprinkle some water into the grave [...], they wash their hands in the tin. After the shovelling is done, everyone takes a little water and sprinkles it over the grave [...]. The remaining water is left in the tin on the grave. [...] After returning to the huts, all men involved wash their hands and face in cold water before the alcoholic drinks are served. (Fieldnotes J48, 4.7.91)

When throwing earth into the grave Abakub says the following words: "*!Khai daoba, Elob di daoba ure, !gâise !gûre, ||nab ge sada hoada di daoba.*" [The cold way, God's way, take it, go well, this is the way of all of us.] All participants say similar words either when throwing more earth into the grave or when sprinkling water on the fresh grave. Several participants address the deceased directly such as "*Migise, !khai daoba ure [...]*" [FZ, you, take the cold way]. (Fieldnotes J49, 4.7.91)

Case 3

When I reach the hut, some men have already gathered outside. Tsab and Xareb sit next to each other. Tsab tells me that the old man is "finished" [*doa go*]. After a period of silence Xareb says: "There is only the way of God [*!Khub di daoba*], there are not two ways." [...] Tsab adds: "The cold way is the right way." [...]

The next day the grave is finished by midday but people decide to wait until it is cooler in the afternoon. The reason given is that "the old man should go the right, the cold way and now it is still hot [*! gamsa*]". After five when the funeral took place and participants were throwing earth into the grave, the dead man was directly addressed, in many cases with a close kinship

term [...] "*Batse, doxoba Elob di daoba ure*" [F/FB, you, please take God's way.] (Fieldnotes K15, 23.7.91)

Case 4

"Cold water is [...] thrown on the grave of a person newly buried, and often the men return again the next day to throw more water on the grave. The reason given [...] was that it 'cooled the soul of the departed' [...]. Further, when the people return from the grave to the kraal, all the inmates, except the bereaved family and the near relatives, who must on no account touch water, wash their hands in cold water, and cold water is sprinkled on the place in the hut where the body was lying before it was taken to be buried. In itself the washing of the hands with water might not be significant, especially as each person is obliged by custom to pick up handfuls of earth and throw them into the grave, and one might suppose that they were merely washing the dust off, but we have noted that the near relatives do not touch the water, and, further, the reason given for the washing on the part of the other inmates is that they would get sick if they did not do so." (WH 1985:80)

At all Hai||om funerals in which I participated, "cold water" was used, or at least mentioned, in the way described above.¹ It was explained to me as a means to guide the deceased on their way and to protect the living from illnesses brought by the dead who have not taken the "cool path" to God. Thus, this elaborate usage of water in ritual implies more than notions of pollution or the pragmatic usage of water to harden the ground reported from other hunter-gatherer groups (cf. Woodburn 1982b:189, 192). While ideas relating to the origin of disease and the destiny of the dead remained vague (at least on the propositional level), the appropriate social behaviour of the bereaved was made fairly explicit. It is directed against possible influences the dead may have on the living (see Marshall 1969:350). One recurrent feature of funerals was the coming together of the ||gâus (band) of the dead person after the burial. People spend the rest of the

¹During my field research I participated in five funerals, all of which took place at |Gomais. Independent evidence of ritual usage of water in the "Bushman" funeral rites is provided by Fourie (1966 [1928]:104) and Schoeman (1957:39).

day together, drinking alcohol if available or simply talking and making music with the \neq *gaukhas* (a pluriarc). The possessions of the deceased were left untouched for some time. As among other immediate-return hunter-gatherers people were not concerned about inheritance (cf. Woodburn 1982b:206). While details of the proceedings vary, and no element seems to be indispensable, there is a limited spectrum of recognized strategies that make manifest the communal concern of participants in the funeral ceremonies, namely to guide the deceased on his way and to protect themselves from disease. These strategies, involving water and other "cooling" substances or actions, are widely known. They overlap with protection measures taken in other instances and they seem to originate from a symbolic strand that Hai||om share with a number of other Khoisan groups, particularly with the Nama. This last point is underlined by the fact that case 4 above is not taken from my own fieldwork notes like the other cases. It is an excerpt from Hoernlé's reconstruction of Nama practices at the beginning of this century (reprinted in Hoernlé 1985). A temporal distance of 100 years or more and a spatial distance of up to 1000 km separates the Nama case from the Hai||om cases.²

²Elsewhere (Widlok 1993) I have shown that there are marked similarities between Nama and Hai||om ritual water usage in existential contexts such as funerals, when encountering a whirlwind, or when dealing with the power of medicine men. Striking differences occur in other contexts. In the Nama cases reported, water (or wet clay) was used ritually when a neighbouring camp was visited and when an old deserted campsite was approached (cf. Hoernlé 1923:27, 1985:77-89), while such practices are absent in the Hai||om case. This corresponds with different political strategies with regard to conflict over water sources. While Nama jealously guarded their water sources and tried to restrict access, Hai||om grant access to water in an attempt to foster mutual cooperation. In the colonial encounter, the two strategies have led to particular problems for each group, as the Nama suffer from in-fighting and the Hai||om suffer from dispossession of their water resources. Hence the negative evidence invites some speculative reconstruction. Assuming that both Nama and Hai||om rituals are derived from a common Khoisan source, it is indicative that the same ritual practices occur among Nama and Hai||om in individual existential situations, while they do not occur in contexts where contradictory social concerns (here, the permeability of boundaries) are

The resistance of rituals to change has been documented in other settings (Bloch 1986). Such consistency in the ritual usage of water across time and space may therefore be remarkable but not entirely surprising. It emphasizes the point that the connection between Hai||om and Khoekhoe groups such as Damara and Nama is multi-faceted and extends beyond language and kinship structure (cf. Barnard 1992). It demonstrates that pastoral and forager groups can share a repertoire of ritual practices which suggests that religious practices are not closely defined by mode of subsistence. It seems that Hai||om religious rituals are not predicated on the fact that they are or were hunting and gathering for subsistence. Although it is not possible to reconstruct the historical process in which this ritual commonality developed, it further suggests that religious practices found today, such as the funeral rites described, may predate any of the social groups we encounter today.

A locally well-integrated and by now ethnically distinctive religious ceremony such as the Hai||om funeral is not necessarily of local origin. To my knowledge, none of these ritual practices are performed at funerals of any of the agropastoralist neighbours of the Hai||om today. There is hardly any contact between Nama and Hai||om and my informants were surprised to hear that distant Nama groups used to have similar ritual practices.³ Given these continuities with other Khoisan groups on the one hand, and the discrepancy with neighbouring Bantu groups on the other hand, the issue of Hai||om ritual water usage suggests that religious rituals cannot *per se* be considered as indicators of a "cultural core" that constitutes a social group and distinguishes it from another. Religious rituals do not (*pace* Durkheim) form the ultimate social foundation for group identity but they are part of

involved. But since the evidence for early Nama practices is only anecdotal, there is little hope that such a reconstruction can be verified or falsified.

³My informants were not very surprised that other people hold similar beliefs about death and life after death because they do not regard such beliefs as a matter of denomination. No contradiction with Christian beliefs is seen and (Owambo) Christian prayers are readily integrated into Hai||om funeral rites.

more general social processes which need to be explained. If rituals do not limit cultural variability in other fields of everyday life, what exactly is their role with regard to change and diversification? In order to pursue this line of thought further we need to turn to fields in which Hai||om religious ritual is more complex and elaborate, and at the same time documented in more detail. For this I now turn to female initiation and the medicine dance.

Female Initiation

There are a number of accounts of Hai||om female initiation or, more precisely, first menstruation rituals which show that in general female initiation has been more elaborate and formal than instances of boys' initiation.⁴ Carstens in his comparison of Nama and Xhosa initiation rites suggested that female initiation is particularly marked in the Nama setting because of the strong socio-economic position of Nama women (Carstens 1982:515). It is a general feature of Khoe-speaking peoples (including the Nama but also "Bushman" groups such as the G|wi, Nharo and Hai||om) to give prominence to female over male initiation rituals (Barnard 1992:112). In the Nama practice, which is similar to that of the Hai||om, female initiation emphasizes the distinct role of women as sexual and economic partners and as "whole persons", while the status of women among Bantu agropastoralists was one of restricted "agents of a man" or a "male set" in terms of production and reproduction (Carstens 1982:514-5). The argument is that as a consequence Xhosa female initiation ceremonies disappeared as they became submerged in marriage rituals which celebrate the renegotiation of rights over women and their offspring. This parallels the fact that Hai||om

⁴The boys' initiation is only described in some detail in the earliest reliable source, that is Fourie (1966[1928]:91). It is also mentioned by Schatz (1993:37) and in accounts I have collected about *|oro ||aeb* (the old time) from elderly Hai||om.

boys' initiation soon lapsed with the decrease of hunting opportunities, while girls' initiation rituals were maintained into the recent past among Hai||om living in very different settings. The Kede of Angola, identified by Estermann with the Hai||om, continued the "girls' puberty festival" even though "the Bantuization of this people has been almost total" (Estermann 1976[1957]:17-8). Schatz gives detailed accounts of Hai||om girls' initiations in a commercial farm setting (Schatz 1993). ≠Akhoe Hai||om today still carry out a girl's puberty festival which, however, is only rudimentary when compared to the accounts given by elderly ≠Akhoe about how it "should be" and how they did it in the recent past. In all of these accounts the basic structure is very similar:

At the onset of the first menstruation the girl is isolated in a separate hut where she is only visited by elderly women or her female friends who also provide her with food. She is adorned by the other women with necklaces and red ointment. On the last day of menstruation, the girl is led outside the hut for a dance in which her head is covered and in which the women not only sing but also dance (Estermann 1976[1957]:17-8; Fourie 1966[1928]:89-91; Schatz 1993:20-2).

Fourie's account also includes two features which have close parallels in Nama female initiation (see Hoernlé 1985:65): Firstly, the boys pass by the initiation hut and each boy's scrotum is touched by the girl to protect him from the diseases he may contract when treading on a place where a menstruating woman has urinated. Secondly, the initiated girl carries out domestic tasks such as fetching water and wood in a ritualized fashion, in this case in a running fashion, accompanied by her |hote (female friends) (Fourie 1966[1928]:91).

In Estermann's account (1976[1957]:17-8) the girl is secluded in a hut made of millet straw. She is led outside to grind a little grain and to a field where she sits on grass piled up for the thatching of a roof. The "people of the village" gather for the singing and dancing and for the slaughtering of an ox. The girl and her companions (including her fiancé) eat the meat. Her body is rubbed with the blood. Together with her fiancé she is incised. She will taste a gourd of beer before all others drink from it.

In Schatz' account (1993:20-2) the girl's body is anointed with fat and the girl is instructed by other women while she is in seclusion. When people have gathered at the following weekend the festival begins as the women dance and make shrill *kiririri* noises in order to "make the girl hear". During this part of the feast a screaming goat is brought near the girl's ears. The

goat's stomach is later used to cover the girl's head which remains covered when she is brought to the dancing ground where a large congregation dances to the music of guitars (see also Schatz quoted in Kube 1985).

The different accounts show how the distinctive practices of everyday local life "colour" the ritual accordingly. The tasks carried out among the Kede (who were involved in cultivation and livestock raising) involve grain mortars, thatching materials and the slaughtering of an oxen while in the farm setting goats, guitars, fetching water and wood are involved. In the account by Fourie that is closest to an economic setting dominated by hunting and gathering, the head-dress consists of a duiker skin, roots are used for the body ointment, and the relation between (menstruating) women and (hunting) men is stressed. However, as other details show, there is considerable overlap between the settings which demonstrates continuity across settings.⁵ It is therefore not surprising that accounts which I collected among Hai||om of today contain elements from various settings and that these differences are recognized.

When I asked Hai||om to describe a girl's initiation, the three associations that came up regularly were the women's dance, the women's high-pitched *kiririri* singing, and the night-long guitar playing. Each of these may be regarded as being associated with a different setting. The fact that it is the women who dance (apparently only on this occasion) is emphasized by Fourie, the guitar playing is mentioned by Schatz, while the *kiririri*, though not mentioned by Estermann (but by Fourie), strongly hints at the Owambo initiation and wedding wailing (*okuligola*) which I found to be very similar (see Tuupainen 1970:47). Furthermore, as I have been told in several interviews with elderly men and women, the girl should do all of the following: she should dig up a |aru (wild potato) but put it back into the

⁵For example, the fact that the girl's head is covered in all instances contrasts with the bareheaded exposure to the sun in the "pregnancy test" of the Owambo initiation. The decoration of the body with red fat, blood or plant extracts contrasts with the use of "white smear" and corn flour applied to Owambo female initiates (see Tuupainen 1970:49, 47).

ground, she should pick up | *gom-e* (mangettis) but only the mature women (|| *kharakhoete*) should eat them while she eats what the elder women collect; she should also be sent to get water and wood and to prepare coffee so that tea, coffee and beer can be drunk by all participants. With regard to the headcover of the girl, I was told that "in the past a skin of a wild animal (*am* | *nai*) was used to cover the girl's head, then copper beads provided by the Owambo were used. Today girls wear necklaces made of glass beads." When I asked the women present what they wore at their own puberty rituals, it turned out that some had worn woollen headcovers, while others had not worn any headcover. In the first year of my field research, one of the elderly women had, on request, made a facecover from coloured beads and had dressed up a little girl as an initiate. But when, about a year and a half later, the situation arose that her daughter had her first menstruation, a facecover was not used. The reason given was that no thread was available to string the beads. The threads and beads which we had provided earlier were used for other purposes, i.e. as exchange items or for personal usage. With regard to the length of a puberty ceremony, situational considerations again seem to be relevant. It was pointed out to me that in the past when there was a lot of food, a ceremony might have lasted for as long as a month, whereas now it was restricted to a week with a festive end at the weekend when farm workers receive their pay. In the most recent events ceremonies were ended after one day (and one night) which was said to be due to a lack of sufficient food.⁶

An analysis of these practices associated with female initiation rites suggests that even a "traditionally" strong ritual can and does incorporate elements of the surrounding everyday settings. Furthermore, there is considerable scope for individual variability which seems to be fostered by the fact that Hai||om initiation is very much a life cycle ritual concerning the individual girl. Unlike the initiation of Bantu agropastoralists, Hai||om

⁶In these cases the period of relative seclusion and restraint exhibited by the girl towards men (no eye contact, no addressing of men) still lasts about a month.

puberty ceremonies are not concerned with continuity of a lineage or with legitimizing a link between families through marriage. Hence, the variability and changes that have affected Hai||om puberty rituals, even when elements from cultivation or commercial farm settings are incorporated, still comply with the characteristic pattern. This pattern relates, above all, to the social position of women in the group and to the fact that it is her position as an individual that is the focus.

Owambo female initiation differs from southern Bantu-agropastoralist (Xhosa and others) practice in that there is an emphasis on female fertility with regard to matrilineal descent and legitimate wedlock and not just as a contribution to the husband's family (descriptions by Hahn 1966[1928]:28-31, Tuupainen 1970:51, see also Richards 1956). Unlike patrifocal southern Bantu agropastoralists, female initiation among the matrilineal Owambo continued much longer under European influence than male initiation (Hahn 1966[1928]:28-9; Tuupainen 1970:45). But it is, in turn, clearly distinct from Hai||om practices. Most importantly, the Hai||om rites, diverse as they may have been in detail, are all individual puberty rites, celebrated on the occasion of the first menstruation. In contrast, the Owambo female initiation was a biennial institution that brought together a group of young women under the control of the local chief and his assistants. It has direct links to marriage, to the authority of chiefs and to the legitimacy of children but not necessarily to menstruation (Tuupainen 1970:48-9). In the Owambo case the initiation was regarded as a woman's passage "into another group" as she became eligible for marriage (Tuupainen 1970:51). In the Hai||om case the passage seems to be of a more personal nature, as expressed by participants in terms of her "now being able to hear properly", "to know about her everyday tasks as a woman". These personal changes, bearing in mind that she will be a menstruating woman from now on, has implications for her social relations. While she becomes a sexual partner for men, she also gains a new role in economic activities, given the problematic relation between menstruation and hunting success (see chapter four).

In sum, a comparative analysis of Owambo and Hai||om initiation

rituals suggests that Hai||om female initiation is receptive to diverse cultural settings (cultivation, farm life, gathering economy), but that the scope of variability is determined by the underlying function of the ritual, namely to publicly mark and recognize the transformation of the individual female from the status of a girl to that of a woman. In this sense the ritual supports the continuity of the clear sexual division of tasks, one of the implicit assumptions on which Hai||om social organization relies. This social recognition of the new, enhanced position of the girl, her new obligations and new prospects as a woman, wife, mistress and mother, remain in essence unchanged by external relations of domination and even by partial alterations in subsistence strategies. It can be contrasted with the Owambo female initiation which was a scheduled and arranged ceremony that involved a submission to the rules of the chiefly authority. There is no equivalent link between initiation and the sustenance of centralized political authority in the Hai||om initiation which lacks elements of punishment (found in the Owambo pregnancy trials) or disciplinary action. In the Hai||om case the locus of control lies with the women, more precisely with the individual women involved. The historical changes affecting the Owambo and the Hai||om female initiation may be accounted for on these terms. With changes affecting the Owambo authority structure (including Christianization), the frequency and form of the ritual changed (parallel to Bloch's description of Merina changes [cf. Bloch 1986]). According to Owambo informants, the event now takes place in a less public and less centralized fashion. In the Hai||om case, the decreasing ceremonial character of initiation rites may be accounted for by the more localized control of the ritual. Length and elaboration of the festival seems to depend very much on the particular situation of the girl's family at the (unpredictable) point in time when the first menstruation occurs. The core themes associated with the Hai||om puberty ritual, the potency of menstruation, the initiate's "learning to hear", the avoidance of eye-contact, the sexual connotations, are still very much alive. Women still build their own small "washing huts" when they are

menstruating.⁷ And girls who have their first menstruation still avoid eye contact with men for several weeks. Hai||om female initiation is receptive to changes in cultural expressive form. But, possibly more importantly, there is diversity in ritual performance because of the personalized control of the ritual which follows the Hai||om way of institutionalizing rituals. Our attention should now shift from rituals as institutions to rituals as institutionalizing practices.

The Medicine Dance and Social Change

In this section I will elaborate the notion of a Hai||om format for institutionalizing practices in rituals and its implications with regard to the central Hai||om ritual of today, the medicine trance dance. Since the trance dance itself forms part of the interaction between Hai||om and Owambo, and since its focus is on social cohesion and cooperation more than on marking of individual life stages or roles, it is likely to show the impact of external conditions on Hai||om social practice and group identity. A close examination of the Hai||om medicine dance is also promising with regard to the initial question of cultural variability and processes of social institutionalization. Not only is the medicine dance an important ethnic marker and a valued resource in interethnic interaction, but it is also the most vivid Hai||om ritual of today.

From early accounts it appears that Hai||om and other "Bushmen" have a history of involvement in the politico-religious life of the neighbouring Owambo (summarized by Williams 1991:113). Louw reports that the custodian of the sacred fire (lit. the "fire of the land") of the Ngandjera Owambo chiefs was a "Bushwoman" (1962:61). "Bushwomen" were also the first ones to light the sacred fire in the homestead of Owambo

⁷It is likely that the usage of water in funeral rites and in menstruation are mutually reinforcing.

chiefs (1962:31). As Heintze noted "Bushmen" had, in comparison with similar groups in East Africa, very few ritual functions at the homesteads of Owambo chiefs (1972:51). But it is noteworthy that they had certain specialized occupations as spies, executioners and hunters above all for the Owambo sacred king (cf. Galton 1890:131, 142). In a small unpublished survey of Owambo attitudes towards "Bushmen" carried out in the 1980s the large majority of the Owambo interviewed felt strongly that "Bushmen" had "the most powerful magic" of all Africans (Shikesho n.d.:6). The survey also includes accounts that confirm Louw's description of the role of "*Kwankala*" women for Owambo kings who sought protection and power from a link with the "Bushpeople" (Shikesho n.d.:appendix 2). While none of the above mentioned functions seem to have survived into the present, Owambo (and others) today still value Hai||om for their hunting and handicraft skills - and for their medical skills in the trance dance.

Trance dances have been reported for most Khoisan groups including the Damara (Schmidt 1986) and virtually all known "Bushman" groups,⁸ among whom the medicine dance is particularly vibrant. But not only is the medicine dance distinctive with regard to the religious practices of neighbouring agropastoralists, it is itself an arena of interethnic interaction. As for the Hai||om, their "medicine men" have stimulated the interest of farmers (Rohlwink 1973, Schatz 1993, see also Wagner-Roberts 1976a, 1976b, 1977) and the opposition of early missionaries (Vedder 1932, Unterkötter 1938, 1942). Today, white farmers and tourists are only in some cases attracted to the skills of Hai||om medicine men. While the service of professional "traditional healers" (mostly from South Africa) is also sought

⁸This includes ethnographic accounts on rituals of the NyaeNyae and Dobe !Kung (Marshall 1962, 1969, Lee 1968, Katz 1982, Katz and Bieseke 1986), the Owambokavango !Xû (Achté et al. 1981, Hynönen 1981), the Kua (Valiente-Noailles 1993), and the Nharo (Guenther 1975, 1976, 1979, Barnard 1979). Hoernlé (1985:83) mentions the "Géi Aogu" as the medicine man of the Nama which certainly relates to the !gaiaokwa of the Hai||om. Since she did not observe any practising medicine man among the Nama, we know little about Nama practices in this respect.

by white patients in the urban centres, Hai||om medicine men are visited by Nama, Damara and Owambo patients. Many of these visitors come from far away, usually in parties sharing a pick-up trucks. As the number plates of customer cars at |Gomais, Tsintsabis and Fisa indicate, patients come from a host of different places including Grootfontein (110 km), Khorixas (400 km), Okahandja (450 km), Oranjemund (1400 km), Swakopmund (650 km), Tsumeb (100 km), and Windhoek (530 km, all approximate distances by road).

On some occasions I came across individual Owambo and Damara who had organized journeys on which !Kung or Hai||om medicine men toured for several days or even weeks the communal areas or urban townships of northern Namibia. At my field site it was mostly !Kung who used this source of income, whereas ≠Akhoe Hai||om were employed as interpreters and brokers between !Kung from the north and their clients from the south. Their brokerage was of a practical nature since Hai||om were able to translate between !Kung and, say, Nama and Damara. But there seems to be a more subtle mediation involved as well in so far as the Hai||om served as a buffer between clients and the potentially dangerous medicine men and as a manager between the medicine men and the potentially inadequately paying customers.

Medicine dancing has become one of the few "San" services that is still in high demand in interethnic relations. As for other economic functions, the contribution of "San" as providers of meat, skins, salt, copper, arrow-poison, and ornamental products has either become obsolete or been replaced by industrial production. Owambo have taken over many of the "traditional Bushman" services since they now occupy the forest areas in large numbers. Similarly, employers on the commercial farms rely less and less on the "Bushman" workforce. In contrast, the demand for powerful "San" medicine seems to be on the increase as "traditional" or alternative modes of medicine appear to be less practised among neighbouring groups. As workers at the Oranjemund diamond mine or at state institutions such as the school in Khorixas spend part of their cash income on "San" medicine

dances, this opens one of the very few avenues through which the Hai||om and others can tap directly into the remote profit-producing activities of the national economy. Although this strengthens the otherwise weak position of "San" towards members of other groups the situation is not like that of the Nharo of Ghanzi as described by Guenther. He found that the performance of the medicine dance developed into "an early phase of a 'revitalization movement'" and a response to "a general state of social disintegration" (1979:111). As Guenther has pointed out, an inflationary increase of medicine dance performances may be a sign of fundamental change and even partial cultural breakdown (Guenther 1986b:289). By contrast, farm owners south of |Gomais have in several cases reported a decline of medicine dances among their workers in the last decades which they interpret as a sign of the "demise of the authentic Bushman culture".

In contemporary Hai||om life at |Gomais and neighbouring places, the medicine dance takes a prominent position, more than any other religious institution or practice. However, this seems to be at least partially the result of a fairly close association with !Xô from further north. During the core period of my field research (that is, while being closely associated with Hai||om in and around |Gomais) I witnessed 25 "medicine dances" and heard of several more being conducted while I was visiting other places. During follow-up periods of research (eight and four weeks in 1993, another four weeks in 1994), I took part in 12 more dances. Table 7.1 gives an overview of these performances and shows that the Hai||om medicine dance is a regular feature of Hai||om life, although conducted at irregular intervals. On average there are two to three dance events in a month which corresponds with the experience of Barnard working with Nharo (1979:73) and with the situation of !Kung in the Nyae Nyae area (Marshall 1969:353) and in the Dobe area for whom Lee has reported an average of one to four dances a month depending on the size of the camp (Lee 1968:38). Although Guenther gives no figures, the Hai||om situation is certainly not inflationary in the sense described for Ghanzi. Table 7.1 lists all medicine dance performances that I have witnessed, specifying the day of the week, the

place, the number of medicine men involved and it gives some indication about the number of participants, especially of visitors and seriously ill individuals. Of the 37 dances listed seven involved visiting !Xû medicine men and another seven involved either Damara or Owambo visitors as patients. Thus, while !Xû "input" and Damara/Owambo "demand" are factors to be considered, they cannot account for the majority of performances.

Table 7.1

Medicine dances witnessed during field research.

Note: |Aba!anis, !Uri!hums, and ≠Nu!hoas are subdivisions of |Gomais, participants, !gaiaokwa and patients are labelled "local" if they lived in the subdivision in which the dance takes place, they were marked "visiting" if they did not live in |Gomais. If not specified otherwise participants are Hai||om.

1. Friday 30.11.90, at |Aba!anis, with two local !gaiaokwa and one young Hai||om woman as the main patient.
2. Friday 14.12.90, at !Uri!hums, with two local !gaiaokwa and one local Owambo as patient.
3. Wednesday 16.12.90, at |Aba!anis, with one local !gaiaob and about 20 local participants.
4. Monday 21.1.91, at Botos, with one local !gaiaob and one local woman as main patient.
5. Wednesday 30.1.91, at |Aba!anis, with one young !gaiaob from !Uri!hums and local women as principle patients.
6. Monday 11.3.91, at |Aba!anis, with two local !gaiaokwa, 30 local participants and two local men as main patients.
7. Sunday 21.4.91, at |Aba!anis, with one local !gaiaob and one local young man as patient, local participants.
8. Wednesday 6.5.91, at |Aba!anis, with two !gaiaokwa, 24 local participants and the same young man as patient.
9. Saturday 1.6.91, at |Aba!anis, with two !gaiaokwa, 10 local participants and the same young man as patient.
10. Thursday 6.6.91, at ≠Nu!hoas, with visiting !Xû !gaiaokwa and 45 local and other participants.
11. Saturday 8.6.91, at |Aba!anis, with visiting !Xû !gaiaokwa, 22 local participants and one local young boy as main patient.
12. Sunday 9.6.91, at !Uri!hums, with visiting !Xû !gaiaokwa and local participants.
13. Monday 10.6.91, at ≠Nu!hoas, with visiting !Xû !gaiaokwa and 14 local participants.
14. Thursday 13.6.91, at Fisa, with local and !Xû !gaiaokwa and 30 local participants.
15. Wednesday 24.7.91, at |Aba!anis, with one local !gaiaob and one local young man (see no. 7, 8, and 9) as main patient.
16. Saturday 1.8.91, at ≠Nu!hoas, with two !gaiaokwa and visiting Damara as patients.
17. Saturday 1.8.91, at |Aba!anis, with one local !gaiaob and one local young man (see above) as patient.
18. Friday 30.8.91, at |Aba!anis, with one local !gaiaob and one local old man as main patient.
19. Sunday 15.9.91, at !Uri!hums, with local !gaiaokwa and visiting Owambo as patients.
20. Sunday 22.9.91, at !Uri!hums, with local !gaiaokwa and visiting Owambo as patients.
21. Friday 4.10.91, at ≠Giseb, with one local !gaiaob and local participants.
22. Sunday 27.10.91, at Goankis, with one local !gaiaob and visiting Owambo patients.
23. Friday 8.11.91, at ≠Nu!hoas, with one local !gaiaob and one local woman as patient, local participants.
24. Saturday 16.11.91, at |Aba!anis, with two local !gaiaokwa and local participants.

25. Friday 13.1.92, at ꞤNu!hoas, with two !gaiaokwa (one local), two local patients and local participants.
26. Thursday 4.3.93, at ꞤNu!hoas, with visiting !Xû !gaiaob and local participants.
27. Tuesday 9.3.93, at ꞤNu!hoas, with visiting !Xû !gaiaob, and local participants.
28. Friday 12.3.93, at !Uri!hums, with two young !gaiaokwa (one visiting, one local) and local participants,
29. Monday 6.9.93, at ꞤNu!hoas, with two !gaiaokwa and one local woman as main patient.
30. Thursday 9.9.93, at ꞤNu!hoas, with four !gaiaokwa and visiting Damara patients.
31. Friday 10.9.93, at ꞤNu!hoas, with four !gaiaokwa and visiting Damara patients.
32. Wednesday 22.9.93, at ꞤNu!hoas, with one visiting !gaiaob and one woman as main patient.
33. Friday 24.9.93, at |Aba!anis, with one local !gaiaob and 26 local participants.
34. Tuesday 22.2.94, at |Aba!anis, with one local !gaiaob and one local woman as main patient.
35. Friday 25.2.94, at ꞤNu!hoas, with three !gaiaokwa (one visiting) and local participants.
36. Saturday 26.2.94, at ꞤNu!hoas, with three !gaiaokwa (one visiting) and local participants.
37. Monday 28.2.94, at |Aba!anis, with two !gaiaokwa (one local) and one local woman (same as in 34) as main patient.

With regard to the frequency of dances it has been argued that ecological stress (disease, food shortage) during winter increases the frequency of performances (Guenther 1979:112). Conversely it has also been argued that dances are less frequent during the dry winter period because people are dispersed and have to spend more energy on collecting food (Katz 1982:37) while Marshall states that lack of food and water did not stop the !Kung from dancing (1969:353).

While food availability may be one of the factors that are considered, it cannot provide a more general explanation as no recourse to "natural" ^{factus} can. The very early theories in particular, which relied on meagre ethnography but which live on in popular thought, regarded "San" ritual, including the medicine dance, as a reaction to dependency on nature with its times of hardship and times of affluence. A former-ethnographer account by Metzger provides an extreme interpretation. Metzger depicts "Bushman" religion as "measured by nature alone" (Metzger on !Kung initiation 1988:73), as "unchanging", and as "a part of nature" (1988:92). A more recent statement has it that "the Bushmen are a peaceloving, happy small people that likes to dance, especially at full moon" (Gauerke 1978). It is true that Hai||om, too, regard the moonlight as positive since it allows them to see during the night



Plate 7.1 Hai||om *!gaiaob* treating a woman. Note bags with *sâ-e* worn around the neck and rattles made of bottle tops worn around the legs.



Plate 7.2 A medicine dance at a cattlepost of |Gomais. Women clapping and singing to the east of the fire, men sitting to the west. The *!gaiaob* dances in the middle (event 22 in table 7.1).

while not burning them like the sun does.⁹ It is also noticeable that during moonlit nights there is more mutual visiting and more child play than during dark nights. Playing and dancing often go together and moonlit nights do stimulate dancing though not necessarily trance dancing. However, in my Hai||om data there is no correlation between full moon and the frequency of the medicine trance dance,¹⁰ nor between natural seasons and the frequency of dancing. Some of these factors may play a role, or may be put forward by participants, but the medicine dance seems to be far from following natural cycles.¹¹

As Bird-David has rightly observed hunter-gatherer studies have moved from seeking explanations in the ecology to seeking explanations in contact with outsiders while both are modes of explanation that seem anachronistic in their simplistic forms (Bird-David 1988:19). The "integrationist" strand in the ethnography of the "San" which set out to show the "external" influences on the "Bushpeople" has largely ignored the trance dance and religious phenomena more generally. Wilmsen (1989), for instance, has not a single reference to it, nor has it been included in the "Kalahari debate". This is particularly striking given the fact that outside demand is known to affect the medicine dances of !Kung groups as it does the Hai||om (see Katz 1982:103, 226). I suggest that this omission is indicative. The problem for a strong integrationist approach is that it would be difficult to argue that a complex institution such as the medicine dance

⁹Marshall (1969:362) notes that the rising of the sun is often the highest moment of all in a night-long dance.

¹⁰See Marshall (1969:356) and Lee (1968:38) who essentially make the same point.

¹¹For my data, as presented in table 7.1, a pattern of frequency could be constructed with regard to a statistical preference for medicine dances taking place at the weekend (more medicine dances took place on Fridays or Saturdays than on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays together). But it should be noted that the medicine dance outside the farming area (case 21) took place at the weekend while the dance at a commercial cattle post (case 22) took place on a Monday (and close to new moon).

could be brought about solely by external forces. Analyzing the effects of the "'modern' context" on "Bushman religion" Guenther has suggested two ideal types (1979:102-6). The medicine dance of the modern "Farm Bushmen" he describes as being "more significant and elaborate" than that of the traditional "Veld Bushmen" (1979:112). Observed differences are greater frequency and a larger number of participants in modern context dances as well as a "highly specialized shaman" who is reimbursed for his services and moves from farm to farm (1979:112).

There are several problems with this ideal-type description. First of all there is "geographic and social proximity" between Veld and Farm, as Guenther himself points out (1979:105), but the performance as such, at least in the Hai||om case, does not differ substantially in the two settings. The following description is valid as a summary for two dances that I have witnessed. The description contains the structure of outward behaviour that applies equally to two distant instances (events 21 and 22 in table 1) which come close to the ideal type settings of "Veld" and "Farm". Dance event 21 took place in a bush camp, remote from any commercial farm and with participants who have spent most of their lives in bush camps. Event 22, by contrast, took place on a cattle post near the Omuramba Owambo where all participants have long-term experience of farm labour (and where Owambo farm workers participated as visitors).

Events 21 and 22

For the medicine dance fires are lit some distance from other fire places, that is from those in front of huts, for blacksmith work or other specific purposes. After nightfall one, two or three fires are lit which are invariably set up on an east-west axis. Participants form an oval around the fires set up that way. While the women are standing, singing and clapping in a half circle around the easterly fire, men are sitting, chatting or just squatting around the westerly fire.¹² Thereby two circles or half-circles are created that are open towards each other which turns the space in between into the main dancing ground for the *!gaiaob* (the medicine man) who not only treats

¹²This is the case in event 22. In event 21 only one fire is lit and men form the western half and women the eastern half of the circle.

ill persons, but who attends to all participants as they move around the circle. All or most women of the camp join the chanting and clapping of hands which is the precondition for any medicine dance to go ahead. There is, however, no obligation to participate and anyone may retreat to sleep when he or she likes. On the whole fewer men than women attend the medicine dance and the dancing itself is performed only by the dressed-up *!gaiaob* and his assistants.¹³

Especially in the early phase of the dance some young men may intermittently dance in the circle. It is, however, the expected behaviour of a *!gaiaob* to attend to patients and other participants by holding and pressing (*xom*) the chest and back, then by rubbing *sâ-e* (perfumed powder) under the nose, across the vertex of the head and from the neck to the upper chest of the individual participant. The *sâ-e* is kept in an ornamented bag which the *!gaiaob* carries around his head and which forms part of his outfit. Apart from one or two of these bags, a headband and the skin of a duiker (*|naus*) or steenboek (*!arib*) worn around the waist on the back are regarded as the characteristic paraphernalia of the *!gaiaob*. Today all items are ornamented with glass beads while in the past ostrich shell beads were used. Other optional items include dancing rattles worn around each leg that rhythmically support the stamping and shivering dance of the *!gaiaob*. In the past, cocoons (of moth larvae that has been replaced with sand) were used for this purpose which are nowadays replaced with the more durable and more readily available beer bottle tops. The only instrument used by the women to support their yodelling and singing are wooden boards to complement the continuous clapping. The clapping and singing supports and stimulates the dancing of the *!gaiaob* who is shaking vigorously for prolonged intervals between attending to the people present.

While everybody present receives *sâ-e* and is treated by holding chest and back, sick individuals (if present) receive more intensive attention. The *!gaiaob* presses his hands or forehead against the patient touching the patient's body where the pain is located. He rubs these body parts in the manner of removing something from them and then touches his own stomach. In a similar fashion he sucks the skin of the patient. After a while he begins to cough and choke as if he is going to vomit. He is then said to

¹³On other occasions up to four *!gaiaokwa* participated in the dance. Furthermore, there are "assistance" men who support the dancers when they lose control over their steps and young men who dance "jokingly" by overtly imitating trance without treating people. In all cases the number of female participants exceeded that of the men, who are usually only half the number. It needs to be emphasized, though, that women are not prohibited from dancing. Female dancers are known and I was introduced to a young *!Xû* woman who was said to be a medicine dancer. But people were not able to recall an individual Hai||om woman who had learned to dance in the medicine dance.

be in a state of *!gai||o*, a trance-like condition. At this stage one or two other men present will support him and prevent him from coming too close to the fire. The *!gaiaob*'s condition reaches its climax when he breaks out of the circle to spit out or throw down some object after coughing into his hand. He then collapses and has to be supported for a while before he gets up again. After spitting, the *!gaiaob* may present an object or substance said to have been sucked out of the sick person's body and produced through the *!gaiaob*'s body. The object called *so|ôa* (a general term for medicine including pharmaceuticals) is inspected by himself and those standing nearby.¹⁴

The basic structure and features outlined above are found not only in events 21 and 22 but with slight differences also in all other recorded instances of the \neq Akhoe medicine dance. There are some differences to the !Kung ethnography which are even more striking given the fact that Hai||om maintain that the "elephant dance" they are dancing today is of !Xû origin and performed in that fashion by !Xû (in Hai||om terms not distinguished from the Ju|'hoan or !Kung of the Dobe and Nyae Nyae areas). Trance seems to be less frequent and also to be regarded as less important by Hai||om than it is among !Kung. As among the !Kung of Nyae Nyae the curing rite (*xom*) is not necessarily linked to trance or to dancing (cf. Marshall 1969:369). It is occasionally practiced by the *!gaiaob* when someone has an acute illness. It is also used by the assistants looking after a *!gaiaob*. But while trance is regarded as evidence for prowess in the !Kung case (Marshall 1969:373), it has been replaced by sucking out *so|ôa* in the Hai||om case, an element which Guenther sees as a Bantu feature (1975:163-4).

In attempts to identify a *!gaiaob* "*!gai*" is related both to the sucking out (*!gai*, "to have pressure on one's stomach as if eructating") and to trance (*!gai||o*, lit. *!gai*-death). *Sâ-e*, the plant powder used, is also mentioned by Marshall (1969:359) but as a substance used by the women for the well-

¹⁴The objects produced can be of various sorts. The things I have seen included small pieces of metal, wood or plastic, maize, *!gaidom* (a root, see chapter 3 and appendix 1), coins, rubber, beads, non-definable masses, pieces of cloth, buttons, berries, mangetti shells, yellow spittle and blood.

being of the medicine men and not vice versa as in the Hai||om case. The gender division is marked by the east-west divide. And, instead of dancing in file and encircling the women, individual dancers move inside a (rough) circle made by men, women and children. Participation is not obligatory in the Hai||om case as in the !Kung case reported by Marshall, although in the latter case members of neighbouring camps are also exempted from the obligation (Marshall 1969:350). Again, the Hai||om case is not the only one that is different from the situation as described by Marshall and Lee. Sugawara reports that "the norm regulating participation" in the "Central San" gemsbok dance "is far from strict" as "there is little social pressure to prompt an individual to participate in the gemsbok dance" (1990:119). Finally, Biesele - writing about the !Kung - says that "there is no formal pressure on individuals to take part, but nearly everyone does" (1993:79). Not only are there different dances which differ in their participation structure (Katz and Biesele 1986, E. Olivier pers. comm.). Rather, at least in the Hai||om case but probably also among Nharo and Central Kalahari groups, changes in participation structure seem to be largely situational. In any case the diversity cannot solely be explained with regard to external pressure.

A more fundamental implication of this situation is that it makes it more difficult to maintain a functional analysis of the "San" medicine dance as part of an interlocking cultural system. The medicine dance that has a single durable repetitive format appears to correspond with and to express social institutions such as the economic division of labour between the sexes, the political cooperation of all members of the local group, and the values and motivations shared by the group. As Lee summarizes his analysis of the !Kung medicine dance: "The !Kung Bushman trance performance can be regarded as a drama in which the stresses and tensions of social life are transformed into a common struggle against external sources of malevolence" (1968:53). Guenther (1979) has criticized such functional explanations as being applicable to the "traditional context" only. However, he applied a functional explanation himself when he argued that changes in

"Bushman" ritual are "functionally related" to the social disintegration of "Bushmen" on the Ghanzi farms (1979:113).

In an attempt to find "internal" explanations for diversity, researchers have looked at the careers and the psychological states of trance dancers and potential trance dancers. Guenther points at the "growing stress" in the life situation of the Nharo living on farms, thereby expanding on another dimension of functional explanations, namely the psychological explanations already put forward by, among others, Lee (1968:49), Marshall (1969:380), Katz (1982). In this view social tension and conflict are managed by the community of participants through the trance of the medicine man.

As for the Hai||om case, the *!gailaokwa* involved in the very similar performances of events 21 and 22 were quite different in appearance and personality. While |Hauseb, the *!gailaob* in event 21, was a very quiet, elderly man, ||Ubeb, in event 22, was an outgoing middle-aged man. While |Hauseb travelled little and only locally and did not stand out from other men in any other way apart from being a *!gailaob*, ||Ubeb has many contacts with urban centres reaching as far as Khorixas because of his extended travel and his first marriage to a Damara woman. ||Ubeb, in contrast to |Hauseb, occasionally makes money as a *!gailaob*, not only as a performer but also as a broker between customers and *!gailaokwa* whom he knows. Nevertheless, the performances of these two men were very similar. This corresponds to the fact that their career as *!gailaokwa* is fairly uniform with regard to their training. The individuals concerned did not report any vocational events known from life histories of other "Bushman shamans" (see Wagner-Roberts 1977). Among the ≠Akhoe Hai||om of today there is no traumatic vocation after which one becomes a medicine man of the kind described by Wagner-Roberts (1977:29-30). Anyone may take the initiative to start (and to stop) doing it. Women are not categorically excluded from becoming medicine women. ||Ubeb and |Hauseb, like all other *!gailaokwa* I have talked to, say that they simply learned to become *!gailaokwa* by staying with !Xû (|Hauseb) or with other Hai||om who had learned it from the !Xû (||Ubeb) to whom the dance is attributed. In an attempt to understand the motivation

behind medicine dances, individual differences of personality and training therefore appear to be only one side of the story. This finding can be seen as a criticism of the basic discontinuity introduced by Katz (1982) in his distinction between the "synergism" of "traditional" dances, and the behaviour of medicine men in it, as opposed to the "non-synergism" of modern dances which accounts for diversity by constructing two "cultures". Katz relates synergy to the transformation of the camp into "a unity greater than the sum of its members" (1982:206, see also 197) while non-synergistic behaviour introduces the anti-communal forces of individual accumulation, professionalization and commercialization (1982:200, 256). In opposition to this view, I maintain that the Hai||om medicine dance as a social phenomenon is a unity not less than the sum of all its individual performances which are known to a group of people. In other words every new performance has a part in the definition of the participation structure and contributes to the construction of the camp (or the group of participants) as a social unit.¹⁵

Expanding on Barnard's remark that psychological and sociological explanations still do not explain "why some men become medicine men and others do not" (1979:78), I would like to add that we also do not know why some people attend (and initiate, support, request) medicine dances when others do not. We need to ask why for many "San" groups the medicine dance "remains one of the ultimate touchstones to their traditional culture"

¹⁵Katz is led to his synergistic/non-synergistic divide through the emphasis his informants put on the distribution of |*num*, glossed as "spiritual energy" (1982:34). By their definition |*num* is "infinitely expandable", "not meant to accumulate" but to be received "in order to pass it on". It "flows freely" and "prevents individuals from having exclusive access to healing powers" (1982:200). In sum, according to this view |*num* is like the food of the bush, given by God and subject to sharing. Trance dancers do not compete over |*num* but those who make attempts to accumulate |*num* may be regarded as advocating a competing image of |*num* or as including it in the wider transactional spheres including the cash economy. Katz adopts the perspective of the traditionalist healers according to whom those men are only dealing with "some 'containable' image of num [|*num*]" and not with |*num* itself (1982:200).

in a situation of change (Barnard 1979:78). A perspective that goes beyond internal versus external conditioning of the medicine dance is one that looks not only at the circumstances affecting the group from outside and at the role of the *!gaiaob* within the group. Rather, what needs investigation is the support a dancing event itself gets from *!gaiaokwa* and other participants working together to make a performance "successful" (in one way or another) or denying their cooperation in such an enterprise. What makes people attend a particular medicine dance and what makes them stay away from another - as patient, as healer, as singer or as passive participant?

Towards a Processual Analysis of the Medicine Dance

Hai||om, when asked to give a short description of what a medicine dance is, will refer to the actions of the *!gaiaob*, his ability to enter a state of *!gai||o* and to suck out objects. However, they will also refer to the clapping and singing, and to the coming together that constitutes the trance dance. It therefore seems fruitful to direct our attention away from the career of the typical *!gaiaob* and the medicine dance in the abstract, to the "career" of particular trance dance events themselves, the way they are initiated, their participation structure and their conceived effects. The following cases indicate what stimulates individuals to start and to join in particular medicine dances (the numbers refer to table 7.1).

Event 33

Yesterday we were sitting at Dadab's fire together with Lukab, Kurukhoeb and Tsab. Tsab is tuning the *†gaukhas* while Dadab talks about a visiting tour we made two years ago. The other men are lying by the fire and relax, they have spent the day building a new grass roof. Cooked food has been eaten. Then Old Maxa's wife lights a fire in the free space between Dadab's and Hoiseb's hut. Dadab turns around and asks whose fire that is. He turns to me and says that they will dance tonight. I ask whether anybody is ill. He replies that the women want them to dance because of the two newborn babies in this part of the camp.

For a while nothing happens as men and women stay at their respective fire places. After a while two, later four, girls stand around the fire and start singing in a weak voice, interrupted by repeated laughter. They are mildly scolded by the elderly women and men. They are told to do it properly and to take wooden boards to make the clapping more forceful. A second fire is lit and women start to gather around it. An hour has passed since the first fire was lit but it is only now that the singing gets more persistent as more voices join in. In the meantime the radio that was playing some distance away has petered out, but the men are still engaged in vigorous talking at their fire. I|naib and Abiab have joined the other men and hunting stories as well as experiences with farm bosses are exchanged. Another hour passes and the group of women has grown to 22 (plus children). A few boys and two young men are near the other fire which has been moved to its proper westerly position. The elder men still do not participate but Dadab turns around at times to see who has already gathered. Hoiseb remarks that it is getting late and finally Dadab asks I|naib to get his "things" (xuna) since the women were waiting. But I|naib seems unwilling and continues his discussion. Dadab dresses himself with his ornamented skin and the necklaces and starts to dance [...].

Events 30/31

Fairly late in the evening a car arrives at the other end of the camp. The word quickly spreads that ||Ubeb has come back with a Damara car. Later we hear the car again, driving away from the main camp and returning. People conclude that they have driven off to collect firewood for a dance. Long after midnight the fires are lit and people start to gather. There are three fires in the east, two occupied by the women who chant and one by the Damara visitors (the driver and two female teachers from Khorixas with their children). Another fire to the west is occupied by the men. There is a big turnout. Young men, close relatives of ||Ubeb, keep the fires going while two !gafiaokwa and several other assistant men dance. The Damara provide sugar, coffee as well as wine and the dancing continues until shortly before sunrise. Packets of sugar and coffee are distributed in the morning. During the day the Damara visit each of the !gafiaokwa at their huts and give them 10 Rand each. [...] The next day another dance is supposed to be staged for the Damara, but at first hardly any women gather to sing. ||Ubeb uses the car horn to call in more participants. No more food is distributed and the dance goes rather slowly that night. It finishes early.

Event 15

Tsu||khaib has returned from the hospital in Tsumeb a few days ago. He looks as bad and thin as ever. People say that it is TB but by now he apparently has problems with his hearing and it is obvious that he is in pain. The clinic seems to have given up on him but his family has not. Two hours

after sunset some five women start to sing at his parents' place. An hour later ||Naiub, whose hut is close by, starts to dance, alternating between the women around the more easterly fire, Tsu||khaib between the two fires and the few men who sit at the fire to the west. [...] Towards the end of the dance (at 1am) several noisy men come to the fire who are not quite sober. They are led away by the other men including Tsu||khaib's brothers.

Events 16/17

Saturday ||Ubeb has arrived with a truckload of Damara relatives (2 women 5 men and some children) and the word quickly spreads that there will be a dance. After wood has been gathered, singing and clapping start slowly with long interruptions. In the meantime, at the other end of the camp, Tsu||khaib's family start singing vigorously. While two !gaiaokwa are entertaining the Damara near his parents' hut, ||Naiub is dancing at Tsu||khaib's place. People are very concerned about Tsu||khaib's condition and they ask me to take him back to the hospital the next day.

Event 35

Thin singing starts very late [...]. !Gamekhas and !Hares who are already under their sleeping blankets, make jokes about one of the women whose voice can be clearly distinguished as shrill and particularly high pitched. I walk over to |Gobehîs' hut where a fire has been lit for a dance. There are then only four young women singing and two young men fooling around, imitating some dances. |Gobehîs is the only elderly woman sitting near the fire. On my way back I pass by I|naib's place who remarks: "≠Khariro ≠khoab ge, |goan di ≠khoab tsu, ||kharakhoen ra ||um" (It is a small elephant (dance), only a children's elephant, the grown-ups are all asleep). However the singing continues throughout the night and only lapses at sunrise. ≠abara, a worker who occasionally takes part in the medicine dance for entertainment, did not sleep at all. He says it was a "great dance" although most of the men from this side of the camp (|Aba!anis), including some of the most active medicine men, did not participate.

I have quoted these accounts of dances in some detail because they reveal the diversity of motivations behind the continued popularity of the medicine dance. More than the rather "unspectacular" careers of medicine men, for instance, the way performances are started and how they develop gives insight into the position and roles of the !gaiaob. The participation

structure of medicine dances reveals more about the reputation of a medicine man than any knowledge about where or how a *!gaiaob* has learned his skill, which is regarded as largely irrelevant. The cases show that although it is indispensable that there is a *!gaiaob* for a dance to take place, it is often social pressure or the singing skill of the women which induces the men to dance. The presence of (paying) visitors can stimulate a medicine dance as much as the acute or chronic illness of a particular person (see events 16/17). The perceived quality or success of a performance depends as much on the women as it does on the men who are actively involved (see event 33).

There is division of labour in so far as the women stand and clap while most men sit and chat. But while women find it absurd that they should go hunting with bow and arrow (although I have seen them acting as able archers in playful contests), a female medicine dancer is regarded as possible and non-problematic by Hai||om of both sexes. Female !Xû medicine dancers are known through hearsay and/or personal encounter. Although there is no female Hai||om medicine woman at present, people say that there were some in the past and there could be more in the future. Although women do not dance, their continued and intensive clapping can put them into what appears to be a trance-like state, detached from the surrounding talking and joking. Women produce and take care of the dancing paraphernalia used by the men. I have seen women warming up the skin and the bags before presenting them to the *!gaiaob*.

In most of the cases, the first initiative for a dance seems to have come from women but this soon becomes difficult to establish as more and more people get involved in the initiative, including adolescent boys and girls who occupy the fire at the beginning. Individual women (young or old) sometimes ostensibly trigger off a medicine dance by being persistent in their clapping and singing (event 35). In some cases they "whip up" a dance by singing vigorously and starting the next song when the performance appears to slow down. In other cases they resist pressure by men who want them to participate or to perform particularly well (see events 30/31).

Conversely individual men may take the role as "promoters" (event 30/31) or "dissuaders" (event 33). In all of the cases mentioned, it is men who are the brokers between a community or individual *!gaiaokwa* and visitors from outside who pay for a medicine dance. But again the suggestion for such a performance may well come from a woman (usually the wife of the entrepreneurial organizer) and certainly she gets a share of the money or goods gained by this method (again see event 30/31).

Hence there are no medicine dances for men or women only, nor for the young as opposed to the old. It is the specific social composition that determines the character a dance may take. An assessment of the medical skills of a *!gaiaob* and the performative skills of the women who form the choir is as much involved as the issue of who is the main patient. It also matters whether outsiders are involved, either as visiting *!gaiaokwa* or as paying patients. A visiting *!Kung* medicine man may be invited to treat a seriously sick person but may also provide an opportunity for a large communal entertainment. A *!gaiaob* may choose (or may be persuaded) to treat a close relative out of particular concern or he may choose to stay away from a dance that is stimulated by a visit of Damara.

These choices are further influenced by the experience people have had of past events. When Damara visitors arrive at | Gomais, people tend to gather in large numbers because payment of some kind is likely. They may, however, not be keen to attend a second night in a row when no more payment is likely (see event 30/31). In one event (10), a large medicine dance of three visiting *!Xû !gaiaokwa* that was considered disappointing by most participants, was followed by three smaller dances (11,12,13) held in each of the three parts of | Gomais (| Aba!anis, *!Uri!hums*, and *≠Nu!hoas*). In another case (32), the performance of the *!Xû !gaiaob* was not well attended after many people were disappointed the first time. A worsening sickness of an individual may drive more people to a dance than a "routine" dance (events 16/17). Certain dance sites are associated with certain people who in turn are associated with past performances. Therefore some places at | Gomais, particularly *!Uri!hums*, have gained a reputation for more

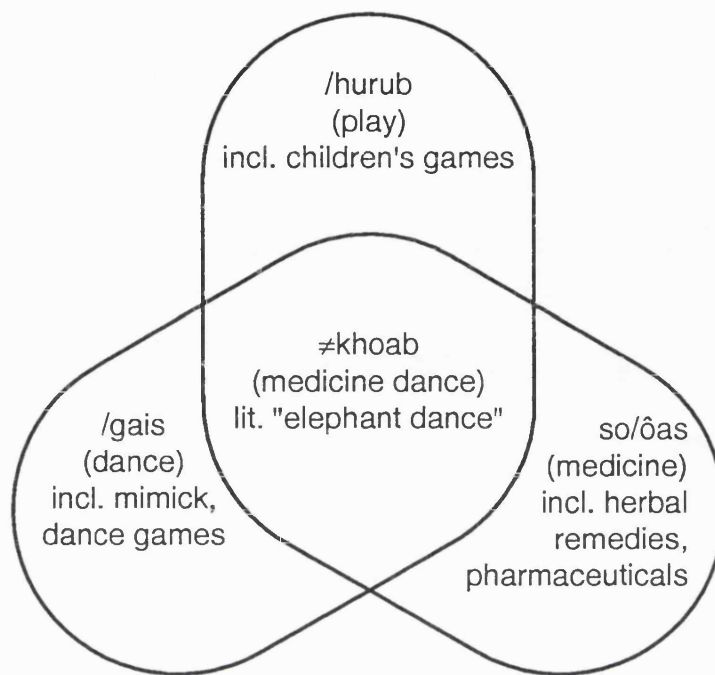


Figure 7.1 Placing the elephant dance in play, dance, and medicine

entertaining performances which attract certain people while they are avoided by others because most participants are either slightly drunk or known for being drunk frequently. It is not surprising therefore that medicine dances at | Gomais not only attract participants who live in that part of the camp but also people who share a similar interest in the medicine dance.

Figure 7.1 depicts the spectrum of interests in the medicine dance by looking at the three fields of meaning on which the medicine dance is mapped: | *hurub* (game or play), | *gais* (dance), and *so* | *ôa* (medicine). The medicine trance dance is part of the larger category of | *hurub*, a category that includes all games played by children or adults. The medicine dance is identified with ≠*khoab*, the elephant, but it is also a | *gais* (dance), a term applied to dances that mimic animals such as the zebra or ostrich.¹⁶ These

¹⁶There no indication why the powerful medicine dance is associated with the elephant other than the fact that it had this designation when it was

last mentioned dances, however, do not have any part in the third category involved, that of *so | ôa* (medicine). *So | ôa* comprises not only the medicine dance but also herbal remedies (often applied by women), industrially produced pharmaceuticals, or those infrequent cases where a *!gaiaob* individually and unceremoniously treats a patient (usually by applying *sâ-e* and by rubbing the afflicted body part). Figure 7.1 could only provide the basics of an outsider's view on the medicine dances witnessed, ordered according to time, duration, place and number of participants. A representation of the insider's view on medicine dances based on these semantic fields would look somewhat like a flowchart comprising the personality of the *!gaiaob*, the "patients" involved, and the site of the dance as relevant "nodes" in the chart. But even a flowchart would only inadequately represent the process by which residents of a camp become participants in a particular dance. Participation not only depends on an initial decision of the deliberate participant (or the deliberate non-participant) according to his or her relative distance to patients, medicine men and other participants involved. Rather, engagement is continually re-assessed as the event proceeds and as individuals are drawn into the activities of others (see Sugawara 1990:119). Furthermore, participants not only make a decision about their own involvement in the dance but they also try to motivate others to engage in the same kind of dance performance they envisage themselves.

The established explanations of the medicine dance can only reconcile external and internal conditioning of "San" cultural diversity (whether in functional terms or not) by introducing a discontinuity between

introduced to the Hai||om. Similarly, it is unclear why the most powerful dance in the Nyae Nyae area was attributed to the giraffe when Marshall did her field research (1969:369). The most central dance of the Central Kalahari San was the gemsbok dance (Sugawara 1990:119).

Farm and Veld "Bushmen", or between "synergistic" and "non-synergistic" ritual behaviour. The Hai||om case studies do not support the notion that a new "Farm" variant is added to an already existing traditional variant of medicine dance nor does it allow the conclusion that the medicine dance among some groups is contingent on its attraction to outsiders while in other cases it is not influenced by this. Rather, the considerable overlap between variants hints at a more general variability, the sources of which still need to be established.

The Medicine Dance as Social Practice

The cycle of innovation and reproduction of trance dances of the Ju|'hoan is fairly local (cf. Bieseke 1993). There is a close fit in terms of temporal and spatial distance between local social coherence (or disturbances of coherence) and local form of religious rituals. Hallmarks are the pervasive "inclusiveness" of the Ju|'hoan trance dance, its character as a "shared activity" and its ability to respond to stress and to "banish trouble from the group" (Bieseke 1993:79). The agreement created by the medicine dance could be said, as Bieseke has said with regard to folklore, to have an "intimate connection" to the cooperation required in a hunter-gatherer society (1993:47-8).

In contrast, the Hai||om cycle between the sources of the dance and its transformative or reproductive performances is not a local one. Unlike the !Kung, who can name most of the composers of trance dances (Marshall 1969:367), Hai||om trance dancers are rather far removed from the sources of ritual practices and meanings. Access is mediated through visiting individual !Xû !gaiaokwa and occasions of close co-residence (in the past seasonally but also in mission centres or army camps). With no guardians of dogmatic truth around, this situation allows for diversity in exegetical comments and interpretations of the dance.

Although Hai||om discuss whether a particular dance is regarded as

a "good" medicine dance or one that is worth attending, there is no attempt to establish a dogma of correct dancing or an orthodox interpretation of dance activities. This freedom from constraint is facilitated by the fact that the Hai||om trance dance is perceived as derived from distant !Xû sources. The medicine trance dance itself, its rhythms and songs, are named after "ǀkhoab", the elephant, and it is pointed out that both animal and dance are regarded as powerful.¹⁸ The fireplace at which the dance takes place is called ǀkhoa |ais (elephant's fire). It is admitted that the !Xû, especially from the Kavango and especially in the old days, knew other powerful dances, but that the Hai||om only learned the elephant dance. There are Hai||om dances named after other animals, the most popular being the zebra dance, the eland dance and the giraffe dance, in which the movements of these animals are imitated. None of these dances, however, involve !gaiaokwa or any of their typical actions. Informants, including !gaiaokwa themselves, deny the possibility that these dances were in the past or could now become medicine dances. They are regarded as of Hai||om origin but they are set apart from the medicine dance (as being not so |ôa and not involving !gai||o). The assumption that the elephant dance has been imported from !Xû country is widely shared not only among ǀAkhoe but also among Hai||om further to the south and east (Schatz pers. com.) and has been reported from other "San" groups as well (cf. Barnard 1979:68, see also Heintz 1978:156). While most singing consists of multi-vocal yodelling, some of the songs associated with the elephant dance contain words and phrases which are not understood since they are said to be in an unknown variant of !Xû. None of the !gaiaokwa claims to know the contents of these songs. No dogma or copyright is attached to the elephant dance nor do !gaiaokwa propagate their views as to how the !gaiaob, the other participants, ||Gâuab and !Khub, or other spiritual energies contribute to the dance. The notion of a "spiritual energy" (called |num by the Ju'hoan)

¹⁸When on one occasion it started to thunder and rain during a medicine dance performance, a !gaiaob called out "ǀkhoab ge" (It is the elephant [that does it]).

activated by the trance dancer is far less central for Hai||om and for other "San" groups such as the Nharo (Barnard 1979:25, Guenther 1979) than it is among the !Kung (cf. Marshall 1969:374, Katz 1982:203-4). However, the changing treatment of |*num* exhibited by "healers in transition" who protect their access to |*num* and capitalize on it, has its parallels in Hai||om (and Nharo) changes in dealing with the medicine dance. This can be illustrated with the diverse statements !*gaiaokwa* make about what happens to them in the dance performance:

Abakub says:

"The !*gaiaoku* always use the left hand because they are dealing with ||*Gâuab*, *Satanab*. God works with the right hand. [...] I used to be a !*gaiaob* myself but I have stopped now because I am afraid of God (*Elob*). God (*Elob*) does not like the !*gaiaokwa* because they are working with ||*Gâuab*." (Fieldnotes H38, 22.4.91)

Lukab says:

"When you are !*gai*||*o* (in trance), your breath (|*oms*) goes to God. There you wash yourself in God's water, his cold water [...] If you have no !*noraba* (magic) then ||*Gâuab* gets you and makes you drink petrol like water. It will burn you. ||*Gâuab* does not help the !*gaiaob*, ||*Gâuab* kills you. !*Khub* helps you. If the days [of an ill person] are not yet over, !*Khub* will tell you, and he will give you the breath of that person for you to take back." (Field tape 94)

Dadab says:

"When the women sing hot (|*gamsa*) I get heated as well. In the past it happened like this: the !*gaiaokwa*'s breath went out (!*gai*||*o*) and had to be caught by the effort of all people present. Today we are just joking (≠*homi*). [...]

The breath (|*oms*) goes up to God (!*Khub*) where the !*gaiaob* is given the strength to heal sick people. The power is called '!*Khub* |*aro* ≠*amabate ha* |*gaiba*' (the God-adds-onto-me-strength). The illnesses are sent by ||*Gâuab*." (Field notes H12 and H13, 20.4.91)

Xareb says:

"When a person dies, the breath (|*oms*) leaves him and does not return. When a person is ill, the breath has left him. The !*gaiaob* then looks for the breath and brings it back into the sick person. [...] With cold water he cannot dance (|*huru*) well, he heats himself up. It is ||*Gâuab* who brings illnesses and he steals the breath of people. And it is God (!*Khub*) who helps you. [...] Those people who say that the !*gaiaokwa* are making tricks

(~~h~~omi), they have no idea, they are jealous people (*surixa khoena*).'' (Field tape 41)

Note that these four men regularly cooperate as *!gaiaokwa* at dances and that each of them answered my questions separately as to what happens when they dance. None of them was particularly eloquent in presenting an interpretation of the healing process. They all said that all they knew they had learned from *!Xû* who they regarded as the experts in this field, especially those from the Kavango area. Their interpretations differ with regard to the power they grant to the *!gaiaob* and the source for a successful healing. It is either *||Gâuab*, or *!Khub*, or the skill of the *!gaiaob* and his assistants. Coolness is, as we have seen with regard to the funeral rites, related to God, benevolent forces and protection against illness. The medicine dance, by contrast, always involves the procurement of heat. The fact that both views are held does not mean that the Hai||om interviewed were confused or Christianized in their views.¹⁹ Rather, it appears to be a common feature in "San" interpretations that they are not deduced from a constituted view but rather added inductively. Compare the following episode which is reported by Katz: "At several times and in different ways, I ask certain healers, 'Did you receive num [*num*] directly from God because your num was so powerful, or did your receiving num from God begin the development of your num's power?' The answer to both questions is invariably 'yes.'" (Katz 1982:243)

Just as different versions of a folktale are accepted so are different interpretations of religious experience. Religious experiences are not discussed in terms of correctness or in terms of matching an inherited "traditional" pattern. It therefore captures the actors' perspective inadequately

¹⁹Each of these men is baptized and goes to church on important occasions but note that only one of them seems to see a contradiction between the two religious spheres. Characteristically he uses the Christian term *Elob* for God, which is however regarded as entirely synonymous with *!Khub* and the two are used interchangeably in everyday conversation. *||Gâuab* and *Satanab* are also always identified as being one and the same.

if we describe individual trance dancers as "in transition", "marginal" or "switching" with regard to ideal cultural types. Rather, I suggest that we regard the profile of a particular medicine dance as the additive outcome of a number of motivations and beliefs by various participants. In other words, just as every decision to take part (or not to take part) in a specific dance event contributes to the development of that particular dance, every new performance contributes to the general pattern of what a medicine dance contains, both in terms of social motivations and in terms of ritual practice.

Bieseke points to similar processes in a case (documented by Lee) among the !Kung in which situational concerns such as conflicts over cattle (1993:79) are incorporated in the dance. But she interprets this process in rather abstract terms as a cultural practice in which the "ancient dance form" can "embody new realizations" (1993:79) incorporating changes or any change that has taken place in the time between the dance performances which are repeated confirmations of social agreement and consensus (cf. Bieseke 1993:47). This is reminiscent of Sahlins' notion of cultural values and institutions "being risked" in practice (Sahlins 1981, 1987[1985]). But this only captures one aspect of practice namely, the tension between inherited cultural structure and the requirement to make these cultural forms meaningful under changing conditions. However, the diversity of Hai||om dance performances enables us to see a complementary and possibly more fundamental aspect of practice.

In the extended Hai||om cycle of creation and performance it is unproblematic to attach new interpretations and beliefs to the ritual forms which are imported from a distant source that no longer has any control over its creation. Rather, what is critical in the Hai||om case is the social process by which a number of different cooperative projects (healing a sick person, protecting close relatives from harm, having a good time, attracting outsiders) are developed along with the institution of the medicine dance. The medicine dance facilitates the social realizations of these projects but it is in turn constituted by the social motivations that are brought to a dance performance. These cooperative projects may be characterized by sharing but

in some cases they may also incorporate aspects of the cash economy. The distance between local concerns (meanings) and the form of the dance (structure) is not only an abstract problem of structure versus agency but it is itself subject to socially motivated practice. That is to say, particular social concerns may be brought in forcefully into the dance performance in the form of "demand cooperation". Alternatively, the enjoyable character of performing the dance may stimulate the social get-together and mutual aid in other spheres. In both cases the form or structure of the dance may either be well-established or innovative.

The visit of a !Xû medicine man who is thought to be powerful (and who may introduce new dancing techniques) may stimulate a large gathering that would otherwise not have taken place. Or bringing in a !Xû *!gaiaob* may itself be stimulated by the demand of a strong medicine man for a particular patient who has not got better after being treated by the local *!gaiaokwa*. It can be assumed that similar processes of social practice are effective in the !Kung case, as well. After all, the !Kung situation with a large number of locally created dances may have been a fairly peculiar and remote setting unlike most other cases of medicine dance among southern African hunter-gatherers which may be characterized by an extended cycle similar to that of the Hai||om in which changing social motives are constitutive for the medicine dance itself. In the final section of this chapter I will suggest that it is its ability to incorporate situative social demands that has the widest institutional implications for the Hai||om medicine dance.

The Medicine Dance and Demand Cooperation

There is enough evidence to indicate that the mixture of motivations that underlies the medicine dance is not a recent phenomenon or one that is limited to the Hai||om case. As Lee has noted "profane" and "sacred" aspects are closely juxtaposed in the !Kung medicine dance (Lee 1969:38). And

when Sugawara emphasizes that amusement is a prime objective of the medicine dance (Sugawara 1990:119), he is not talking about a disintegrated farm setting. Marshall describes how on different occasions various motives triggered off a medicine dance performance: visits, disease, pure joy, a successful hunt and the tensions of sharing (1969:354-356). And the resources for satisfying these demands seem not to have been completely local after all. Even one of the most prominent !Xû healers freely admits that her "healing work has some very deep mixtures" of different ways of life (Katz 1982:225).

As already mentioned, the Hai||om term for performing a medicine dance is " | *huru*" ("to play" also translated into Afrikaans as *speel*). To say in Hai||om that people have "played" (| *huru* in the meaning of performing a medicine dance) is not to say anything very definitive unless it is specifically stated who did the dancing, who else participated and in what way, whether there was an outside stimulus (i.e. visitors) for the dance and so forth. Guenther (1979:111) has alluded to the "ludic", the playful element in "Bushman" religion, but maintains that its "casual and disengaged" character disappears in the farm setting (1979:118). A notion of "social drama" could comprise both the "ludic, disengaged side" described for the "traditional" situation (Guenther 1979:118, see Lee 1968:53) and the "entertainment" element that comes to the fore in a situation of change (see Katz 1979:258). The medicine dance dramatizes in so far as emotional and social stress is relieved through the performance of the dance. But there are occasions when intragroup, particularly intercamp, tensions prevent people from performing a medicine dance (Katz 1982:37). Furthermore, unlike a "drama", there is "no clear path" (Katz 1982:258) enshrined in the medicine dance that would inform the medicine man, or indeed any other participant, whether to orient the dance towards community healing or large scale commercialized entertainment. There is, as has been demonstrated for the Hai||om case, a sense of unpredictability given the diversity of possible motivations for a dance and between circles of participants who come together for specific dance events. There also seems to be a notion of social

manoeuvre and management and not only orchestrating which is not captured by the notion of "drama". Although there is not a great deal of competition between the individual participants in the dancing performance, it might be construed as an event of "demand cooperation" that involves a re-definition of social distance and nearness. As Katz (1982:207) has pointed out the medicine dance as a social event facilitates other non-ritualized forms of exchange (gossip etc.) to take place at the same time. These kinds of exchanges, which I have tried to capture in the case situations given above, show the elements of managing and demanding the cooperation of women, men, *!gaiaokwa*, and (at times) paying visitors.

The medicine dance is not only a ritualized drama that is shared by the members of a local group who mutually assist each other. Just as sharing often involves demand sharing, so does cooperation in the medicine dance involve demand cooperation. The women may want to attract a medicine man to dance for them and a *!gaiaob* may want to stimulate the women to sing and clap forcefully either because he simply wants to dance particularly well or because the dance "serves" a visiting outsider. This outsider can be a paying Owambo or a *!Xû* colleague who is just paying a visit but to whom some men want to demonstrate their own skills.

Although the individual performance of the medicine men is more pronounced in the Hai||om case than in the *!Kung* case there is little sense of competition between dancers. What is at stake is not primarily the reputation of a medicine man but the "cooperative projects" that the participants bring to the dance. A medicine dance in which a local *!gaiaob* spends most of his time treating one patient who is closely related to him, supported by virtually all the residents of the vicinity, reveals a different cooperative project from one in which people of all the camps in the settlement come together to deal with paying Damara patients or with visiting *!Xû* colleagues. The mode of cooperation created is again different in a setting where most residents stay away from a dance that is dominated by medicine men of dubious standing and participants who are wage labourers and their families who bring a lot of alcohol with them (either

internally or still in bottles). Support in the medicine dance can be both a test of, or a confirmation of, sharing relations and the limits of solidarity that are so important in everyday life. The cooperative circles forged in the medicine dance give important guidelines for everyday social relations. Virtually all relationships mentioned in the previous chapters are touched upon in the medicine dance events. Since all Hai||om in a settlement are related through classificatory kinship, participation in the medicine dance is one way to draw kinship relations narrowly or more broadly. Place of origin and land affiliation are confirmed by dance performances, which is particularly important in a situation of displacement. The spheres of sharing, exchange and selling are also defined to some degree both internally as well as interethnically. A Damara or Owambo may pay for healing services but he may also enter into or continue a long-term exchange relationship in which the Hai||om who were particularly active in the dance will at a later stage expect support or gifts from that outsider. The medicine dance thereby provides a versatile institutional framework for other aspects of social life.

The medicine dance deserves special attention as the only large "ritualized" practice that is truly dominated by the Hai||om themselves. Police inquiries, political meetings, church gatherings and other "ritualized gatherings" are initiated and led by non-Hai||om and they largely follow the rules of the social group that dominates them. The medicine dance, by contrast, exhibits how Hai||om modes of social practice permeate the medicine dance ritual. The performance of the medicine dance does not follow a rigid scheme or a dogma of interpretation. The diversity of individual motivations is not restricted by the medicine dance. Rather, strategies of situationally creating cooperation, often in terms of demand cooperation, characterize the Hai||om medicine dance.

Conclusions

On the grounds of my analysis of Hai||om funeral rites I have refuted the notion that in order to be an integral part of everyday social life ritual has to be of local origin or directly linked to the dominant mode of subsistence. Hai||om ritual usage of water in this context manifestly derives from a source outside the local ethnic group. Investigating the more complex female initiation rites provided not only further evidence for interchange with other groups but also showed diversity with regard to the local setting in which the ritual is performed. But these rituals, even though they show parallels with that of neighbouring groups, are strongly coloured by Hai||om concerns and concepts. In the case of female initiation the underlying social strategy of recognizing the enhanced and transformed social status of girls at the onset of puberty and, more fundamentally, Hai||om gender relations, put limits on the diversity. In this case the transformations, more than the source, of the ritual exhibit a characteristic pattern of female initiation as practised by Hai||om. The main part of this chapter then focused on the continuity and interethnic relevance of the medicine dance as the major religious "San" ritual of today. In a situation of change and intense interaction with neighbouring groups the medicine dance proved to be neither an epiphenomenon of outside pressures and demands, nor a ritual that comes in a number of separate versions separated by marked disjunctions. Rather, it can be understood as a forum for cooperative projects which define social distance and nearness on the basis of participation and non-participation.

Religious institutional practice was shown not to be an obstacle to external cultural influence, nor to individual variability and situation-specific conditions. The medicine dance in particular has been shown to be not only subject to long-term cultural transformations but also to be an arena that is developed continually in the process of social practice. The central ritual of the Hai||om today is an institutionalized arena in which cooperation is constructed, demanded and renewed.

Chapter Eight

Storytelling and Ethnic Identity

Introduction

The preceding chapter has demonstrated the role of the Hai||om medicine dance ritual as an arena for establishing social solidarity. Like the social relations emerging in the other fields of everyday social action, cooperation in ritual affairs demonstrably follows distinct patterns which can be identified as "Hai||om". These patterns could not have been derived from outside sources despite their receptiveness to external factors. What remains to be examined in this final chapter is the extent to which the construction of Hai||om identity itself is a product of internal social patterns and to what degree it is generated by external ascription and domination. In this chapter I will also explore the ways in which ethnic identity maintains and supports patterns of social organization.

So far my description has focused on Hai||om views about themselves and about their neighbours and their relations with them as they emerge from an analysis of everyday interaction. In this chapter Hai||om statement knowledge about their own position in the wider world is analyzed. At the centre of my investigation is the large body of Hai||om oral stories, a particularly prolific arena for Hai||om reflections on their own position in the wider world.

The Hai||om Case and the Study of "San" Identity

In 1953 Gusinde declared rather than demonstrated that the Hai||om were "Bushmen hybrids" (1953:27). A year later Hai||om were evicted from Etosha after a commission report had stated that their "assimilation has

proceeded too far" so that it would not be "worthwhile to preserve the Heikum [...] as Bushmen" (Schoeman n.d.[b]:6). The commission withdrew its earlier recommendation [Schoeman n.d.[a]] and suggested that the Hai||om are to be removed from Etosha either to the north where they were expected to be absorbed by the Ngandjera Owambo or to the south in order to serve white farmers (Schoeman n.d.[b]:14). These events, which I have analyzed in the first chapter, indicate that the question of how "San" ethnic identity has been established and maintained proved to be particularly problematic in the Hai||om case.

Dissatisfaction with the apparent "mixed nature" of the Hai||om (in terms of culture, language, race and mode of subsistence) seems to be directly linked to the decline of ethnographic and linguistic work with Hai||om after a relatively short period of intense academic interest. Close ties between Hai||om and neighbouring groups had been noted early on but most of the early ethnographic data we have on the Hai||om were collected in or near the Etosha region where game hunting and full time gathering were the major sources of subsistence (Cipriani 1931, 1955, Schoeman 1957 [1951], Fourie 1966 [1928], Lebzelter 1934). It is therefore not altogether surprising that attention shifted away from the Hai||om after the eviction of the last Hai||om from Etosha in 1954, coinciding with the onset of hunter-gatherer research in the Nyae Nyae and Dobe areas. The changing Hai||om situation was not only less attractive for local German- and Afrikaans-speaking ethnologists like Gusinde and Vedder.¹ It was also made unattractive and difficult for foreign researchers whose interests conflicted with the apartheid principles under which South West Africa was governed

¹A conceptual shift towards the "real Bushmen of the Kalahari" had already been initiated by ethnographers like Vedder, Gusinde and Köhler (1957). The cultural particularism that dominated their ethnology made the Hai||om far less amenable to a study of "pure cultural types" once hunting and gathering was taken away, leaving a racial, linguistic and cultural "hybrid" (Vedder 1942:76, Gusinde 1954:56). Hai||om were regarded as "racially and in terms of mentality already considerably different from the pure Bushmen of the !Kung type (Köhler 1957:54).

at the time and under which most Hai||om had to live.

When Namibia became independent and research with Hai||om once again became feasible, the question as to who represents the true "Bushman cultural style" was no longer posed, at least not with regard to the Hai||om. With the "Kalahari debate" at its peak, the categories "Bushman" and "San" had become problematic as units of analysis in anthropological writing unless the history of political discourse about "Bushmen" was the topic of investigation.

The debate gave room to a pragmatic strategy that concentrates on individual cases by using a group's self-referent name. This strategy does not, however, solve two of the underlying issues, namely, how a systematic anthropological account of hunter-gatherers in southern Africa should deal firstly, with the social experience of identity and secondly, with the presence of practice patterns and limited variation clustered around established group identities.

Wilmsen, by rejecting the term "Bushman" not only makes a statement about the negative political implications of this terminology (cf. Wilmsen 1988:137). He also disagrees with the idea that the category of "indigenous southern African hunter-gatherers" (called "Bushmen" or "San" or anything else) has any reality outside scholarly representation (Wilmsen 1989:3-4). Such a category could be, and very often still is, treated as a sub-category in comparative hunter-gatherer studies suggesting that analytic findings about "hunter-gatherer societies" concerning egalitarianism, land tenure and so forth are valid for groups like the Ju|'hoan, the Nharo - and the Hai||om. In contrast, Wilmsen focuses on continuities between so-called "San" and neighbouring groups of pastoralists and agropastoralists underlining his historical perspective of frequent cross-overs between the two and his theoretical stance that class distinctions bring about the ethnic identity of "San" groups. Pre-revisionist anthropology has been criticized for treating "Bushman" as a primordial society and culture that could be subsumed under the analytic category of hunter-gatherers (and understood in its opposition to pastoralists etc). The revisionists treat all ethnic units and

their social and cultural characteristics as the product of the contradiction between social classes that are driven by the economic forces of a regional social formation. A post-revisionist perspective, which I have adopted in this thesis, accepts ethnic groups as a social but not primordial fact, influencing the ongoing history of interaction and conflict between people in economically and politically different positions. A post-revisionist perspective regards it as a matter of inquiry whether, for instance, a particular social and cultural feature of Hai||om social life for instance is distinctive with regard to a hunter and gatherer background or with regard to the position of Hai||om towards agropastoralist neighbours. One way of carrying out this inquiry with regard to group identity, is to go beyond the issue of naming and to analyze more elaborate self-representations as in Hai||om folklore.

Hai||om Folk Story Performances

The oral folk stories that are told by Hai||om today contain motifs that are widespread among Khoisan peoples as Schmidt's comprehensive catalogue of Khoisan folklore shows (Schmidt 1989, see also Thomas 1950, Guenther 1989). The majority of Hai||om stories that I have recorded feature Haiseb, the trickster figure who appears in numerous Khoisan stories if under different names. In Heikkinen's unpublished collection of ≠Akhoe Hai||om folklore, 15 out of 24 stories are Haiseb stories (Heikkinen n.d.[a]). These are very similar in content to those recorded from Damara and Nama in the past. But unlike in many Nama and Damara communities folk stories are very much a living tradition for ≠Akhoe Hai||om. Storytelling events take place spontaneously and irregularly, but the plot of the stories is widely known among Hai||om adults and children.²

²This I soon realized after feeding back those stories which Heikkinen had collected two decades earlier. After reading out some of these stories to Hai||om, more narrators came forward and I was told more elaborate

The traditional stories are complemented by what appear to be more recent stories that have (as yet) not been reported for neighbouring Khoisan groups such as stories of "Johnny and David". These are stories that are set in the farm milieu. All of these stories form folklore in the sense of narratives that are readily available to "just plain folks" at any time. Written collections of folklore like that by Heikkinen are misleading in that they do not account for the interactive and performative character of these stories. Often several "stories" (here: the units in which oral literature is documented in collections) are in practice linked up to the extent that the passage from one story to the other is not perceivable. The storyteller is in constant interaction with the listeners who in many cases echo him, prompt him by naming sequences or strings of words they remember from the story being told. In some cases several storytellers take turns. In one instance when I listened to three men sitting at a fire taking turns to keep the story going, there were only storytellers and no passive listeners (except for myself, but in this case I was neither recording nor prompting them).

Taking the live performances as our baseline it appears then that the "chunks" of oral literature presented in collections of stories are codified units made to fit into a coherent collection. In everyday life there is no codification of that sort. Not only do the beginning or end of an *ises* (a story) remain unmarked in most contexts (often, speaking on tape is a notable exception), but the boundary of a single story may also become blurred in the event. The length of a story performance can also vary considerably. In most events that I have witnessed, stories were much longer than those given in the Heikkinen manuscript although the core plot was the same. In other cases, that is among less skilled storytellers and in situations other than the communal round at the fire, stories may be shortened to the length of jokes. The difference, though, is that in these contexts a story is "invoked" (rather than told) by a brief episode or quote which is sufficient to create in the listeners minds a whole storyline and to share a laugh about

versions of stories at storytelling events that lasted several hours.

the events described.

A collection of stories can present a number of well-known versions that a plot may have, but it is impossible to present all actual or even potential realizations of a story that may lead to new versions being circulated. It is also difficult to incorporate all aspects that form the context in which a storytelling event takes place. But an analysis aimed at understanding these stories which ignores the fact that numerous versions and contests exist is self-defeating. In Hai||om oral stories incoherences and diversity appear which only become meaningful when the link between reflective product and the situation of the person engaging in the production is maintained. Much of what Bieseke has described for the Ju' |hoan situation also applies to Hai||om folklore (cf. Bieseke 1986, 1993). In their production of reflective accounts Hai||om feel free to bring personal experiences into the account of a story. Furthermore, as Bieseke has shown in detail for Ju |'hoan stories, folklore in this social context not only entertains but also communicates meaning about the world. It is particularly effective because it links entertainment with instructive communication (cf. Bieseke 1993:60). The communication of oral stories is potentially open to all and it is multifaceted. This can be illustrated by looking at the format in which the "Haiseb steals the fire" story was conveyed to me.

When inquiring about who could tell Haiseb stories to me, I was referred to those who were said to "know" these stories. A few individuals (not only old people) are renowned for their skills at performing these stories but the gist of the stories is known to most Hai||om. A few sentences are usually enough to make everyone present burst out laughing as the listeners anticipate (or fill in) the events of the story. The story of Haiseb stealing the fire from the Ostrich is very popular and there are many contexts in which it may be invoked without actually been told: an ostrich dance (mimicking the ostrich) is sometimes performed to the ostrich theme played on the musical bow. Until recently, ostriches (and their eggs) were a common sight in Hai||om country and, of course, the fire, which the story is also about, is still a common sight. Although the elderly Hai||om men still

know how to drill fire with two sticks, we only saw them doing this once and that specially to let us watch and photograph them.³

When discussing the practices of some decades back, elderly Hai||om explain how all fires in a camp were lit from a central fire, the *hai | aisa*, also mentioned by Fourie (1966[1928]:87), that was ceremoniously lit by the *gaikhoeb* (the senior man). On one occasion, my informant, an elderly man shifted, quite unexpectedly for me, from an account of the practices of the old days of lighting a fire by drilling to a vivid story of how Haiseb brought the fire to the Hai||om. To the amusement of the children and adults present he spontaneously recited a few lines from the "Haiseb steals the fire from the Ostrich" story:

"Ostrich had the fire and he kept it under his wing. Once he was clapping for Haiseb to dance [*| huru*, lit. play, perform the medicine dance]. Haiseb told the Ostrich to dance as well, but the Ostrich refused. He then told him to dance like this [raises his arms]. When Ostrich started to dance like this, Haiseb quickly took [*!kho*] the fire from him and lit a tree nearby. The Ostrich had his legs burned the way they look today." (Fieldnotes P48, 20.11.91)

While this short version of the story was given, several of the bystanders engaged in the way Haiseb and Ostrich were dancing and enacted how Haiseb encourage the Ostrich to dance with his wings up so that he could take the fire. There are, as this event illustrates, ample opportunities to invoke these stories. The characters, particularly Haiseb as the main protagonist, are omnipresent and are in some cases even creatively extended into present day life. Khau|nais, an elderly woman and an excellent storyteller, was quick to introduce the name *Haise di | aebe* (Haiseb's fire)

³Part of the reason is that the "tonteldoos" (a tinder-box used for striking fire from a stone with a piece of iron) reached the Hai||om through the Owambo at least several decades ago and that today matches and lighters are found almost everywhere. Moreover, as groups are less frequently on the move than in the past, most fires are lit at a stationary camp with a burning or glowing stick taken from a neighbouring fire. Often children are sent to get it.

for our gas stove, since it could be lit anywhere and anytime without collecting firewood and could be used for cooking instantly, even after rain. Similarly, observing that it took me only a few minutes to erect the small tent I used when travelling, the tent from then on was often referred to as *Haise di oms* (Haiseb's house). Tents had been known before and were usually called *seil oms* on account of their material (*seil* is Afrikaans for canvas) but this rapidly built individual tent seemed to epitomize a typical Haiseb strategy. "Haiseb's house" therefore indicates the kind of house the clever trickster would have.⁴ Haiseb-like features are also sometimes attributed to fellow Hai||om and there are individuals who are nicknamed "Haiseb".

Thus, Haiseb stories are not separated from the events of everyday life but can be triggered off in many ways throughout everyday life. Although the central figure of these stories is Haiseb, the contents may touch upon a variety of topics that are more or less related to the deeds of this trickster figure. They do not differ from stories that do not involve Haiseb in so far as all these stories deal with questions of how things came to be the way they are, where features of the natural and human world originate from (see Schmidt 1988a), how the human and non-human animate worlds are linked, and how disguise and strategy are applied in an entertaining way. Haiseb stories often also deal with specific subjects of human existence such as the relation between life and death, knowledge and power, and relationships with one's in-laws. One complex of stories that does not usually involve Haiseb relates to the emergence of the economic division between hunter-gatherers and (agro)pastoralists.

⁴As has been reported from other Khoisan groups (Schmidt 1973) the mantis is called *haiseb*, as well, and is at least in part regarded as the animal form of Haiseb who frequently changes his appearance in the stories. However, in everyday life this association between mantis and Haiseb is not marked. No taboos are associated with the mantis which contrasts with the practice of other African hunter-gatherers like the Hadza (Woodburn pers. com.). At least today, Hai||om frequently kill the mantis when encountered because people are afraid of its bite.



Plate 8.1 Dadab telling a Haiseb story at |Gomais



Plate 8.2 Men and women dancing the Ostrich dance

Hai||om Ethnicity and Stories of Economic Diversification

Hai||om views on ethnic and economic differentiation are manifest in a number of accounts that Hai||om, like other Namibians with access to an extensive body of oral stories, tell in a variety of ways and situations. In my analysis I want to point out the specific relation between Hai||om stories and their everyday setting.

The first time I recorded the story of economic diversification was when I was visiting each resident at |Gomais to record the size of their gardens that year and the returns they got from them. The failure of gardens was often blamed on lack of rain or on poor soil. But in some instances, when I pointed out that the returns were very low in contrast to fields of the Owambo on the same soil, Hai||om gave various explanations about why they were not getting as much out of their gardens as the Owambo did. In the first instance, given below, !Kharegus, an elderly woman gave a brief account of why she thought the Owambo are rich and the Hai||om are not.

Case situation 1

!Kharegus tells me:

"The Hai||om woman found an iron [bar] and a hoe. But then the white woman snatched [*tsabu*] the iron from her and stole [|*â*] it. And the Owambo woman grabbed the hoe. Hence the Hai||om woman was left with a wooden stick only, which she sharpened to use for digging out bush food [*haiaib khaira-e*]."

TW: "Is this why the Owambo are rich today and the Hai||om are not?"

!Kharegus: "Yes, that is why the Owambo now have gardens and millet [*sâu-e*]. And that is why the white people have the store and machines while the Hai||om gather bush food."

TW: "But today you also have hoes, you also have iron tools."

!Kharegus: "Yes, now we also have all these things, but we are still in need."

[The next day]

TW: "Yesterday you told me how the Owambo got the hoe, the white woman the iron bar and the Hai||om the digging stick. I wonder what did the Damara and the !Xû get?

!Kharegus: "The Damara got the iron and the white woman got the spade. The !Xû got a digging stick, just like the Hai||om. [...]

Listen, Toma, the Hai||om woman had the spade and the hoe but the white woman and the Owambo woman told her to put the things down on the ground. She did that and the others snatched the things. For the Hai||om woman there was only the stick left. Hai||om are stupid [*Hai||omna gane i ge*]. We are stupid [*nida ge a gane*]." (Fieldnotes S65, 8.2.92; S90, 9.2.92)

Stories of the origin of different modes of subsistence appear repeatedly in Khoisan folklore. Sigrid Schmidt (1989:55-6) in her catalogue of Khoisan stories lists four variants that have as their core plot the story of the "black woman who takes the iron hoe from the Bushwoman" (three !Xû stories collected by Estermann and Guerreiro and one Hai||om variant recorded by Schoeman). There are even more accounts of the story in which "Bushpeople" had their cattle taken away by neighbouring peoples who then became the pastoralists of today (cf. Schmidt 1989:57-8). The tricked hunters are either "Bushmen" or "Damara", while the cattle owners may, depending on the version, be "Herero" or "Nama".

Although this particular account is deliberately stimulated by the repeated prompting of the researcher, it exhibits characteristic features of the way Hai||om deal with their folklore. The Hai||om narrators readily develop the theme of a narration apparently unrestricted by any dogmatic original version. !Xû and Damara who do not feature in the story are incorporated (at least intermittently) without violating the well-known core plot. The reference to white people may have been introduced - they do not feature in the other known versions - possibly because the prompt for giving an explanation came from a white anthropologist. But, as I indicated earlier, updating and complementing the plot of a story are common features of Hai||om folklore in general.

While on the occasion of case 1 above the initial impetus for telling

the story came from me as the researcher, the following case is an example of the way in which folklore is embedded in everyday life, and how it is used by Hai||om to express their current situation.

Erratic food distributions have repeatedly caused stirs among the people of |Gomais. One recurring reason for trouble is the fact that a nearby government scheme at Tsintsabis receives far more food donations than |Gomais and, if food arrives at |Gomais, it is usually not given out all at once but stored at the Owambo church worker's house. The personnel involved in distributing - or, as it appears to many, *withholding* - the free food is Owambo-speaking. This results in discussions about the free food distributions being linked with arguments about rich Owambo versus poor Hai||om. In the following case we waited for some people to get ready so that we could leave for Tsintsabis when Khau|nais said:

Case situation 2

"N. [the Owambo-speaking government official in the Tsumeb area] has distributed sugar at Tsintsabis but the people of this place [|Gomais] have only got maize meal. The Owambo, they have millet and everything else. The Hai||om woman had the hoe first but the Owambo woman came and snatched it from the Hai||om, she took it just like that. And the Hai||om woman was left with the digging stick. And the Owambo man, he made a corral and drew the cattle into it. The Hai||om man was left with the eland. And up to today they go into the bush to follow the eland, they follow it and follow it until it finally dies. The people of the beginning [=gurokhoena lit. "first people"] were really stupid."

!Gamekha is standing close by. She laughs and says: "Yes, that is the way it is." (Fieldnotes 50, 23.11.93)

On this occasion the contents of the story were invoked rather than told. Or to put it differently, telling a folk story in Hai||om is in certain contexts not so much reciting or re-narrating as it is realizing the potentials of a plot. And, as the example shows, two stories or motifs (in this case those of "hoe-snatching" and of "cattle-theft") may be invoked together. In this situation Khau|nais' comment is triggered off by our imminent trip to the place where, from a |Gomais perspective, people are continually being

given free food. In some instances, as in the following example, the narration or discussion of recent events and that of stories (*isete, ises* pl.) merge into each other.

Case situation 3

!Naredoeb and Eliab have just returned from a visit to the neighbouring Owambo who had proved to be "stingy" and unwilling to help them with food. A conversation develops in which everybody complains about the rich Owambo who leave them behind [*khaose*].

!Naredoeb: "My father [*di !naekhoeba* lit. "the one who gave birth to me"] had his cattle taken away from him by the Owambo. That is why we are people who are left behind [*khaokhoen da a*]."

TW: "So, did Hai||om also have cattle in the old days?"

!Naredoeb: "Yes, the very first people had cattle and the Owambo had [*khande* [eland antelope]."

TW: "!*Khande*?"

!Goros [!Naredoeb's wife]: "The wild animal [*am | nai*]."

!Naredoeb: "Yes, the wild animal."

TW: "Oh yes, I know."

!Naredoeb: "The old man who was looking after the cattle was blind. And the woman had a hoe. The Owambo woman came and she greeted the [Hai||om] woman [invokes the greeting] She then asked: "What are you doing with that hoe?" [The answer was]: "I am using it to work in the field." The Owambo woman then said: "Give it to me." But the woman said "No". Then the Owambo woman simply snatched the hoe from her. The Owambo man came and greeted the blind man [invokes the greeting]. He asked him: "What are you doing?" [The answer was:] "I am herding my cattle." The Owambo man told him that he would look after his cattle. But he stole them. The [Hai||om] man was left with the elands only. And the woman was left with a wooden stick which she uses to dig out [*aru* [wild potatoes]]." (Tape 40; Fieldnotes T42, 17.2.92)

The cases given above demonstrate that "traditional stories" or "folklore" are not an unchanging inherited repertoire that is detached from present day life. Stories are not restricted to formal events at the evening

camp fire but they "do service" in everyday life in the way Bieseke has shown for the Ju | 'hoan (cf. Bieseke 1993:196).

In the last case mentioned !Naredoeb used the traditional story to emphasize the anger he felt towards a particular Owambo he had to deal with at that moment. Khau | nais' realization of the same plot given in case 2 underlies her lamenting the injustices of free food distribution. In the first case given the same storyline is used as a rationalization and explanation of the prevailing conditions.⁵

While the accounts of events and causalities are not uniform, there appears to be a distinctive Hai || om pattern of joining accounts of the past with pre-occupations of the present. It is as if Hai || om forage in a forest of shared stories and motifs, retrieving what they require in their immediate situation and amending it if necessary. Their way of dealing with the statements expressed in the stories contrasts with that of neighbouring Owambo agropastoralists who have storylines very similar to those already described. Consider the following story, similar variants of which have been repeatedly recorded among the Ndonga Owambo.

"Kanzi [the Herero ancestor] and Nangombe [the Owambo ancestor] came out of the leadwood tree [...]. The tree split, when Kalunga [God] told it to do so, and four people came out, two men and two women - they were Mangundu [Nangombe] and Kanzi and their wives. When they came out they found a short, light brown person with big buttocks in a squatting position at the foot of that tree. Kalunga put in front of them cattle, sheep, hoes, axes, milking pails and small digging poles and asked them: 'Why are you so idle? Can't you see those things which I put there for you? Take, each of you, what you want!' Kanzi stood up and took many cattle, all the sheep, a milking pail and a small digging pole. Nangombe followed him and took a hoe, an axe, a milking pail and the rest of the cattle left by Kanzi. The small, light brown man with big buttocks stood up and took a small digging pole, left by the others. Kalunga ordered them again, saying: 'Go,

⁵Schmidt (1988b:116) reports on a case in which the negative self-representation of a Damara story was turned into a positive one in the context of growing political self-confidence. I suggest that the link-up with current preoccupations is an inherent feature of Hai || om folklore which does not only occur in the course of recent forms of political engineering.

then, where you want to go!' They went and scattered. Kanzi went with his wife southward, the light brown man went into the forest eastward, and Nangombe and his wife went to Ondonga, where they built their homesteads and stayed and multiplied." (Williams 1991:58-9)

Williams, who sites a number of sources, has apparently amalgamated individual accounts gathered by early Finnish missionaries and researchers with the result that the original situation(s) in which the story was told is not preserved but obscured. But we have some clues about the social motivation from the context of Williams' book. Unlike the Hai||om I worked with, the Owambo informants (in this case a Ndonga teacher and a Kwanyama priest), were selected as "experts" on old times. Apparently they were cooperative in presenting historical accounts that are seemingly de-contextualized with regard to specific situational settings. The context of "giving an authoritative account of how it was" is after all just one peculiar context that academic researchers expect and produce when they go out to collect oral history. Williams implicitly assumes (or accepts) that the story has one unchanging social function namely "to strengthen their [the ancestral clan leaders'] relationship and to preserve it for coming generations" (Williams 1991:58). She is at pains to establish the "originality" of this version as a "social norm" and disapproves of Vedder's account of a Herero version on these grounds (cf. Williams 1991:60).

From a seemingly neutral perspective the story is understood to depict historical changes explaining "the new way of life" of the Kwankala who "retreated into the forest when part of his hunting area fell into the hands of the new immigrants" (Williams 1991:59). The economic division (and geographic distribution), symbolized by the items and the land being offered, is presented as the outcome of a free but binding choice.

The contrast to the Hai||om stories I have presented is striking on two analytical levels. On the contents level there is no talk about any violent appropriation or tricking having taken place in the Owambo version, the central element highlighted by Hai||om narrators. While the Owambo version apparently underlines the common origin of cattle-owning Bantu peoples,

and by implication creates a disjunction between them and the unnamed "light brown person with big buttocks", the Hai||om narrators are not preoccupied with the origin and ancestral relations of ethnic groups but with their control over economic assets and the way economic relations are installed. On a functional level the normative character of the Owambo story contrasts with the free-ranging way in which Hai||om appropriate the story for their own purposes. The question is not one of whose version is right since in all cases these stories cannot count as disinterested, detached accounts about ethnic difference and conflict. Rather, they are an integral part of the process of constructing ethnic difference.

Furthermore, it seems that we are not just dealing with different versions of the history of economic differentiation but also with different ways of dealing with statements about the past.

Hai||om Historicity and Patterns of Storytelling

In the context of the storytelling event in case 2 it was impossible for me to establish whether !Naredoeb was recounting an event from his father's life story or whether he was talking in more general terms about his forefathers. In any case he deliberately amalgamated personal life story and a shared traditional story to add emphasis to his account. Thus the change in register was difficult to perceive but that does not mean that no distinction is being made between modes of narration. When some other men joined us later, !Naredoeb told them that I had recorded the "*ises*" (the story) of the Owambo who stole the cattle.⁶

The distinction between "||*gaeb*" (anything told) and "*ises*" is only

⁶Hai||om "*ises*" is related to the Nama word "*ib, isib*" glossed by Krönlein/Rust as "image, appearance, figure" ("Bild, Erscheinung, Gestalt") and derived from the verb "*i*" "to be similar" (Rust 1969:208). In present-day Damara the word is restricted in its meaning to short riddles and similes (Eiseb pers. comm.).

inadequately captured by their reference to "real historical" versus "constructed mythical" time (or "Jetztzeit" versus "Urzeit" see Schmidt 1988a:29). The relation is much more complex. Stories that narrate the adventures of two farm workers called "Johnny and David" are regarded as "*ises*" while personal accounts of how a malevolent bush spirit has pursued a hunter are considered to be a "||*gaeb*". That is to say, "supernatural" and everyday time events may come together in any of the two modes. What seems to distinguish the two is the fact that *isete* have the property of providing a model for interpreting events in time (whether current or mythical) while ||*gaekwa* (||*gaeb* pl.) do not reach beyond the specific context in which they are set (see Gell 1992:319 for a more general discussion of this topic).

Moreover, the two are distinctive with regard to the degree to which they are part of shared knowledge and confirmed truth (*ises*) and individual experience and affirmed truth (||*gaeb*). This sociological difference also hints at the possibility for one to evolve into the other and for the two to merge.

While being closely intertwined with everyday practice, reflective thought that manifests itself in *isete* folklore is "freer" in that it can transcend the needs of a single moment and can, at least in part, be reproduced independent of these (see Bieseke 1993:59-60).

The basic Khoisan notion of an inversion that separates the creative from the current period (Schmidt 1988a:38-40) provides a narrative tool for organizing the contents of the Hai||om *isete* given above. That which the Hai||om lack today, they are said to have had in the beginning. But this is not the bottom line of analysis. Not only is the ever present inverse condition of the past used to make sense of the lamented conditions of the notorious present. The truth of the present situation is also used to construct the truth of the presented past. After all, Hai||om today depend on their agropastoralist neighbours for livestock, hoes and other tools and the consumables produced with them. Far from depicting a completely different world, the *isete* relate to the present where the struggle continues. The Hai||om stories about economic and ethnic differentiation are very similar

to the general structure of the Haiseb stories already mentioned. Haiseb is a trickster figure and he uses his tricks in order to gain access to what he has lost or to what he wants to receive. The marked difference, however, lies in the fact that Haiseb opens up resources (like the fire) and counteracts privileged access and individual accumulation while the Owambo in the *ises* limits what used to be accessible and uses it selfishly.

The composition of themes and motifs in all these stories is complex and contains many polysemous elements. But one undeniably strong element is the fact that Haiseb as the protagonist tricks his antagonists in order to gain access while, conversely, the Owambo are said to have restricted access by tricking the early Hai||om. In one of the stories told Haiseb tries to steal cattle from a woman called !Abises. In the Ostrich story already mentioned he takes the fire by outwitting the Ostrich. On the whole Haiseb attempts to get access to all kinds of "things", outwitting others who, unlike the Hai||om, are described as powerful characters who defend their resources by trying to kill Haiseb. Looking again at the Heikkinen collection of ≠Akhoe Haiseb stories it can be demonstrated that struggle over access is a strong theme in almost all of the stories without suggesting that the stories in their diversity and polysemy could be reduced to this one theme.

Recurring themes in all of these stories⁷ are the ways to get access to wives (10, 34, 29), fire (19), cattle (7) and milk (6), magic (15,14) which in turn is used to gain access to shelter (14, see also 4) and to food (15). The food in question is usually prized food such as honey (15, 11), fat (25, 6) and - most frequently - meat (38, 28, 22, 10). Other forms of access include access to water sources (28, 41, 1, 9), safe passage (1, 9) and very generally to life and survival (39, 38, 41), including eternal life (35). The overriding pattern is that Haiseb, the trickster and culture hero, outwits a stronger counterpart (the Elephant, the Lion, a person with magic) in the struggle for access to the resources just mentioned. Haiseb plays the role of the protagonist who makes available resources that were at first monopolized

⁷The numbers refer to the Heikkinen manuscripts (Heikkinen n.d.[a]).

by these more powerful beings but that can be enjoyed by humans today. The stories are about how to seize power to access these things and they document failed attempts to protect privileged access to them. In other cases Haiseb struggles to protect his legitimate access over resources or simply to protect his life against the challenge of others.

Therefore, there is a common theme, though structurally inverted, that links the stories of cases 1 to 3 with the Haiseb stories. While Haiseb is a protagonist, the Owambo is not. The utterly negative self-image that Hai||om express in the cattle and the hoe stories ("the poor", "the offspring of stupid people", "those left behind", "those who have only hunted and gathered food") suggests, when seen together with the positive deeds of Haiseb (often called "the first Hai||om"), a Janus-faced identity. In the Hai||om case, representations of active egalitarianism and what may be called "passive victimism" appear to be two sides of the same coin. Following this line of thought it also becomes clearer why Hai||om in the ||*gaeb* register give explanations that are not only self-critical but also critical of others and not as one-sided as the *isete* have depicted Hai||om identity. It also makes clear why the stories can be used to express disillusion (as in case 1) or indignation (as in cases 2 and 3).

While stories may change according to the context in which they are told, similar contexts do not necessarily produce the same stories (or any stories) to be narrated. I recorded the following case on the same day as case 1 above. Making my way through |Gomais from garden to garden I asked all garden-owners the same question, namely why their gardens were so small and unproductive while the Owambo have big gardens and high yields. The following response came from ≠Noa||khoab, an old man who certainly knew the "hoe story" but who chose to reply in a different way:

Case situation 4

≠Noa||khoab: "God made it that way [Owambo being rich, Hai||om being poor], I don't know why. The Owambo had the meat and the skins of their goats and cattle. They used the skins for making clothes. We had the wild animals [*am | nai*] and made our clothes from their skins."

TW: "So, were people the same in the beginning?"

≠Noa || khoab: "Yes, it was just the same [| *guidigo*]. Some Owambo were also poor." (Fieldnotes S40, 6.2.92)⁸

The next statements were collected immediately after !Kharegus had given her account (see case 1).

Case situation 5

TW: "What happened to the men at that time?"

!Kharegus: "There were no men [present]."

||Nameb: "Look here [points to his bare feet], the white people and the Owambo wear shoes, while we have only bare feet."

!Handagub: "We do not know how to read but they do, that is why they have things like this [holds up a box of matches]." (Fieldnotes S91, 9.2.92)

The two men had been present when I was talking to !Kharegus. When I asked about the role of the men, they did not narrate an *isete* but they simply underlined that the story about the hoe characterized the situation of women and men alike by pointing to their present needs.

The "stealing of hoe and cattle" story is only one possible option (composed out of two storylines) of dealing with the question of economic difference. Just like the old man in case 4, other Hai ||om responded to me without referring to events in the distant past at all. In case 6 ||Goaragub, an elderly man, speaks.

Case situation 6

||Goaragub: "Hai ||om are many more people to eat from the food they have

⁸Remarkable parallel representations of a balanced match between wild animals and their products versus domesticated animals and their products are found among the Hadza whose stories exhibit a fairly positive self-image (Woodburn 1993).

and they are given less money. The Owambo get a lot of money, also from you white people, they earn a lot of money."

TW: "But the ENOK workers, Owambo and Hai||om, they all get a lot of money."

||Goaragub: "But Hihib [one of his sons, a wage labourer] buys on the book [on credit] and at the end of the month there is nothing left. The Owambo sells beer and buys food for that money. It is the Hai||om who give him the money and who sell things to him [for a very low price]. It is our own mistake [*di faut*, Afrikaans]." (Fieldnotes S40, 6.2.92)

In this case, where I had expected to receive another "mythical" answer, I was presented with a fairly sober analysis of economic relations. But the two accounts are not altogether different since the underlying structure of who is to blame, the cunning Owambo supported by white people on one hand and the stupid Hai||om on the other hand, is strikingly similar to the statements made in the *ises*. The final case (7) underlines that the "sober analysis" presented here is not distinct from an *ises* in terms of "real" versus "fantastic". In this case Tobiab has showed me around the (cultivated) Owambo gardens and the old (fallow) Hai||om gardens near Owambo compound.

Case situation 7

Tobiab says: "We are no longer allowed to have gardens here but the Owambo are because they are the friends of the [ENOK] bosses. [...]"

TW: "Why did you leave Khures [their original place north of the farming district]?"

Tobiab: "Every good place, you [as a Hai||om] stay at, you are chased away. [...] We are like doves, drinking water [wherever they can find it]. There are only Owambo now at Khures since Sarel [the first ENOK boss] brought us here."

TW: "He brought you here?"

Tobiab: "Yes, he brought the men, women, children and all things in a lorry from Khures. This is how we came here." (Fieldnotes D70, 6.1.91)

[Some weeks later]

| Nagubes: "Listen Toma, Tobiab is a drinker. We got here because Sarel brought us here in a lorry. The men had gone to look for work on the farms and on their way back they met Sarel. They started work with ENOK but they asked him to take the lorry and fetch the women, children and all our things from Khures." (Fieldnotes H48, 21.4.91)

This series of incidents illustrates that *||gaekwa* like that of Tobiab can be full of ideological half-truths (and allegedly are far from sobriety). But it also illustrates the idiosyncratic character of these statements. Individuals frequently take issue with the accounts given by other individuals but not usually with traditional stories. *Isete* are additive in their statements and their contents are not subject to debate. States of being, such as the ethnic identity of groups encountered today, are taken for granted. Ethnic identity is not made contingent on modes of subsistence. It is, rather, the other way round in that the *ises* explains how modes of subsistence (as a variable) became attached to (preexisting) ethnic groups. More fundamentally, Hai||om today, in traditional stories as well as in other accounts, represent themselves as a distinctive and coherent social unit.

Hai||om telling of folklore provides a forceful institutional arena for reproducing an awareness about ethnic differences, economic diversification and about the lessons that can be drawn from exemplary struggles over access to local products, tools, and other cultural implements.

Conclusion

On the basis of this analysis of Hai||om folklore we may conclude that ethnic difference is taken so much for granted that it is not the main preoccupation for Hai||om narrators. Rather, they refer to it in communicating and fostering the access to resources and products about which they are concerned. In this attempt, ethnic identity serves as a tool and at the same time as an identity marker that defines the position of social

groups who enjoy access to resources through interaction with each other. Ethnicity is therefore a mediating device that makes sense of these positions while at the same time renegotiating them. Hai||om oral stories, particularly folklore, form an important arena for this process.

To describe this process analytically we require conceptual tools that neither rely directly on ethnic labels nor ignore the fundamental role of ethnic identity in the construction of social relations. In a practice context ethnic identity, once it has become part of social practice, influences the further course of interaction between social group. The marked identities serve as a working assumption in present-day dealings with social relationships. The Owambo, the Hai||om and others are not primordial as labelled ethnic groups or in their association with certain modes of production. What seems to be primordial, though, is the fact that humans mark each other off into groups and, as soon as they cease to live as hunters in a world of hunters, they tend to employ a division of labour among segments of that social formation (see Comaroff and Comaroff 1992:50-1). A condition that applies to all ethnographically documented hunter-gatherer groups. This division of labour, however, remains subject to renegotiation and reinterpretation, for instance, in folklore. This process of reinterpretation itself is itself an integral part of everyday practice and follows from the way in which social relations are organized more generally. The people who identify themselves as Hai||om along with other hunter-gatherers in southern Africa take ethnic identity for granted but at the same time make it subject to their specific ways of organizing access to resources in an immediate-return mode.

Returning to the issue of ethnic classification raised in the first chapter, it can be argued that what appeared to be a process of oscillation between ethnic identities (see Elphick 1985 [1977]; Marks 1972) may have been a different outcome to a similar attempt of linking-up with a delayed-return system. At some stage, when "San" cease to be "San", it seems that they were successful in "permeating" the Khoekhoe delayed-return system. The fact that Hai||om apparently got on better with Owambo than with

Herero can be explained as different outcomes of relations between the Hai||om and two groups with delayed-return systems that reacted differently in terms of integration in a similar situation. As Gordon has pointed out settler ideology and the power of the state in the Namibian case prevented the obliteration of ethnic boundaries (cf. Gordon 1992:263). However, Cape "San" and "Hai||om" ways of reflecting about their position towards neighbours may be different, as well. There is a danger in assuming that the Cape "Sanqua" and the Hai||om "San" had as much in common in terms of social strategies as the similarity of labels suggests. The ways in which hunter-gatherers like the Cape "Bushmen" or the Hai||om incorporate ethnic identity into their social practice remains largely hidden in historical accounts. These accounts privilege authoritative modes of dealing with the past and with the continuity of ethnic identity. These modes characterize most documents written by Europeans and accounts of oral history like that of the Owambo case outlined above. Other sources such as Hai||om folklore reveal a much less legalistic perspective on ethnic identity. Approaches to history and ethnic identity which are less akin to the approach taken by the analyst remain underexposed. Therefore complementary explanation to that of historical reconstruction is required. In this chapter I have attempted to show that, notwithstanding ascriptions by outsiders, Hai||om ethnic identity, when approached from the experience of social life, shows aspects of a specific social style. This social style is quite unlike that of most historical and other synoptic accounts in that it encourages situative definitions and does not disconnect representations of the past from the situational settings of the present.

Conclusion

The key question of this thesis has been concerned with the analytical reality and relevance of social institutions in the context of the relations between changing Hai||om hunter-gatherers and their agropastoralist neighbours.

This question has re-emerged on three empirical levels. At the elementary ethnographic level the issue was taken up according to which the Hai||om form a "polymorphic cultural jumble" as Gusinde (1954:56) has put it. On a comparative level a similar notion had to be assessed according to which hunter-gatherer societies of the immediate-return type are, in Brunton's words, "cultures [of] little more than heaps of randomly associated elements" (1989:678). Finally, more generally, in the context of interdisciplinary or applied work, challenges to anthropological descriptions of social institutions and processes had to be dealt with. Sperber (1994:54-5) and others have questioned basic assumptions of social anthropology namely that there is a cultural hole that is more than the sum of individual brain states and that there are social factors, distinct from ecological and psychological factors, that channel the dissemination of cultural representations. In the sense that these three issues form a hierarchy with the elementary ethnographic level providing a necessary base, it is fair to say that hunter-gatherer studies, in particular those of non-isolated changing hunter-gatherers like the Hai||om, are at the heart of anthropological theory. The same kind of reservations held by other disciplines against anthropological analyses are repeated within the discipline towards hunter-gatherer studies and within these, at least since the "Kalahari debate", with regard to southern African foragers like the Hai||om who have a long record of trade and interaction with neighbouring groups. Therefore any anthropological analysis of the Hai||om or any current day "San" group has perforce to meet the challenges that any investigation of society and culture faces.

The Hai||om case study confirms many of the observations made

with regard to other "San" groups and other hunter-gatherers: signs of "cultural importation" are numerous and cultural styles are diverse (chapter one); subsistence strategies are combined in flexible and diverse ways according to immediate-return motivations (chapter two); transaction modes rather than possession or input-output considerations are at the centre of social interests (chapter three); shared knowledge is not rigidly codified but grounded on classifications of the natural environment (chapter four); social distance is continually re-negotiated in the context of communicative interaction (chapter five); spatial organization is flexible and shows a high degree of individual autonomy (chapter six); belief and ritual show little signs of concern with orthodoxy, formalization or correctness but are instead characterized by pragmatism (chapter seven); and the definition of cultural identity and ethnic differentiation in folk stories does not rely on a fixed or authoritative version but is pragmatically developed in everyday interaction (chapter eight).

Woodburn's model (1982a), according to which the "systematic principle" of disengaging people from material and ideational property operates to perpetuate the existence of immediate-return systems, has been contested both on logical and empirical grounds. Brunton's critique (1989), for instance, maintains that these groups are inherently unstable and culturally impoverished because of difficulties in affirming and transmitting the attitudes and values (especially of egalitarianism) that form the core of this "cultural principle" (1989:674; original emphasis). At least in part the problem seems to be conceptual rather than logical. To conceive of hunter-gatherer societies as characterized by "cultural impoverishment" (Brunton 1989:679) is to construct "cultures" from "Cultures", i.e. the existence of bounded cultural entities according to the image of a codified, hierarchically controlled, and self-confidently invoked and defended cultural style.¹ By contrast, an alternative view holds that there is only one human culture with

¹Köhler (1957:52) and Budack (1981:part 32) use a similar strategy and similar formulations ("Kulturverarmung") in their description of "acculturated Bushmen".

a potentially unlimited number of social strategies that appropriate and combine cultural styles. In this view, proposed most recently again by Gatewood (1993), it is forms of social organization or patterns of social strategies that channel cultural variability, and not cultural variants, which we mean when talking about social or cultural groups. Ideas and representations of "cultural continuity" and "cultural identity" are subject to continual re-definition. They do not have any essence other than that which is ascribed to them by social actors. Correspondingly, to avoid essentialism is to move away from "cultures" as the basic units of analysis towards patterns of social practice.

Hence, what appears to Brunton (1989:677) as "poorly developed or non-existent" "socially accepted mechanisms for maintaining cultural integrity" may alternatively be identified positively as a consequence of a socially accepted openness in selecting and combining cultural elements. It does not follow from Brunton's diagnosis of diversity in cultural style that these diverse elements do not enter the "social arena" (cf. Brunton 1989:677). In this thesis I have argued that hunter-gatherers have distinct ways of constructing social arenas and of manipulating cultural elements in these arenas.

But how does this conceptual move deal with the logical problem addressed by Brunton and others? The point has been made that any publicly communicated and transgenerationally reproduced evaluation implies inequality. This by implication causes egalitarian social groups to be unstable and ephemeral. Vogt has, in response to this issue, suggested that we should separate and hierarchize two logical levels (cf. Vogt 1992:140). Following Carnap he distinguishes "meta rules" shared by all group members, even in an egalitarian immediate-return system, from "object rules" on which views of individuals may diverge (cf. Vogt 1992:141). For example the phenomenon of "social fluctuation" is governed by a meta rule that demands the "circumvention of unsolvable conflicts by separation of conflicting parties" and which is matched by the object rule that every person can split from or join a group at any time (cf. Vogt 1992:141-2). By

introducing this logical device the paradox that there is a socially accepted "obligation not to create any obligations" can be resolved (Vogt 1992:140). The evaluation that everybody has to share under certain conditions, is non-egalitarian in the sense of being an obligation and it is delayed-return in the sense of being only reasonable in a long-term perspective. It can, however, be conceived of as being on a higher logical level than the object rules for sharing that apply in a given situation and that are neither enforced authoritatively nor determined by past or future distributions (i.e. that are egalitarian and immediate-return in nature). The two obligations are logically not the same, they are not values of the same variable. The logic that is at work here is more complicated.

The conceptual move away from "cultures" towards patterns of social practice also enables us to reach an empirical solution to what appears to be a primarily logical problem. How can the hypothesis of inherent instability of immediate-return systems best be tested? Apart from the difficulties that have emerged in recent revisionist debates about the continuity or antiquity of existing hunter-gatherer societies, the more fundamental problem lies with the fact that there is much to suggest that it is above all external political and military pressure that has led to the destruction and demise of these societies. There is little possibility now of establishing historically whether the cause was exclusively external pressure or an internal "structural instability" which as Brunton claims (1989:679) is "just as important". The only other way of investigation is therefore to demonstrate an existing complexity in the ethnography that *pace* Brunton is "an outcome of an underlying structure connecting the elements" and not just of the number of elements (cf. Brunton 1989:678). It is at this point that the challenges to hunter-gatherer studies and those to anthropological and social theory more generally converge. What needs to be demonstrated is that social institutions have a reality that goes beyond representations and that in turn affects social action beyond the sum of individual social acts. That is to say that empirically the existence of meta rules as operative social principles has to be demonstrated in a way that goes beyond the cultural principles (or object

rules) that are readily expressed by social actors and observed by observers. After a process of deconstruction and improved methodological and epistemological awareness, a demonstration of these social processes has to go beyond reified analytical concepts. It has to account for both perspectives, that of the actors and that of a comparative analysis.

One way towards achieving this objective is to complement the logical distinction between meta-rules and object-rules with a three-fold differentiation of "social context" into three interactive levels, namely "condition", "position", and "situation". "Condition" denotes the constitutive order underlying social action (including the political economy as well as culture in the above sense) while "situation" denotes the situative interactive setting in which an individual activity takes place. Most analyses take these two levels for granted, which correspond to the logical levels of "object rules" and "meta rules". Some explanation is necessary with regard to the intermediate level, that of position. "Position" denotes the social arenas that are constituted by the sum of individual activities and influenced by the natural and social environment without being reducible to either the individual situations nor to the external conditions. Their analytical reality lies in the fact that at this level social institutions influence individual action and persist under changing conditions. A full development of a theoretical model along these lines is beyond the limits of this thesis. But in this short discussion I want to hint at the connection between a more general comparative analysis and an ethnography as it is presented in my thesis. I am not concerned here about the ontological reality of the levels distinguished. It should suffice to say that the level of "position" is not ontologically different from that of "environment" (condition) nor that of "subject" "individual person" (situation). In all three cases the analytical reality is derived from the perspective of an actor in a systemic context. The "position" level is only a further extrapolation of this perspective taking into account the findings of this thesis.

As recent anthropological work outside the field of hunter-gatherer studies (see Sally Falk Moore 1987:729, Toren 1993:162, Zeitlyn 1993:201-

205) indicates, there is a more general critique of "reading off" the structure of cultural concepts (*pace* traditional American Cultural Anthropology of Geertz) or the structure of social institutions (*pace* traditional British Social Anthropology) from the previously defined units. In various fields of research this has led to attempts to elicit systematicity directly from everyday behaviour rather than investigating how decontextually constructed rules are applied in practice. In this thesis I have attempted to carry out an analysis of this form with regard to the case of Hai||om hunter-gatherers.

Chapters one and two show how external conditions have influenced and transformed the Hai||om mode(s) of subsistence over time. Hai||om social organization and social practices, however, do persist, sometimes in the representations of the social subjects but more fundamentally in effect. Hai||om take an immediate-return hunter-gatherer position with regard to the delayed-return activities with which they come in contact. Or, to be more precise, while subsistence changes, the internal and external social relationships that observers have identified with a "hunting and gathering way of life" persist. As chapter one has shown the externally defined contexts are inadequate for identifying these relational continuities in the variability found on the level of individual situations.

Chapter two suggests that we should shift our attention from production and synoptic input-output analyses towards a systematization of concepts and actions that is derived from a study of the individual practice of social deixis and of transactions. Following this strategy, chapter three shows that social values and cultural styles are influenced by the economic conditions without being determined by them. Social patterns are demonstrably replicated over space and time and they are even systematically expanded into fields of interethnic contact.

The main part of my thesis is directed towards investigating in detail how immediate-return "forager" social practices are perpetuated and also towards investigating the internal and external social relationships that are implied in social action. As chapter three shows, the socially accepted modes of exchange are central for the construction of these social relationships. It

is the transactions that construct and reproduce the social positions (of kinship or any link involving a sense of common ground). The modes of transactions (sharing, exchanging, bartering and selling) are tied to social positions which are continually invoked in the individual transactions and which pattern these transactions. These constructed positions are on an intermediate level between situational setting and overall condition. They are institutionalized, as chapter four shows, by being drawn from environmental conditions in the process of classifying land and its resources. This process of "naturalization" creates the widely shared body of knowledge that structures social positions along with modes of transactions and access to resources. The following three chapters (five, six and seven) demonstrate how this knowledge is transmitted and reproduced in everyday life with minimal reliance on authority relations and without explicit codification.

Chapter five focuses on language pragmatics, particularly the ways in which language use not only continually invokes social relationships but at the same time allows for a limited and patterned exploitation of the ambiguities contained in language practice. It suggests that it is not merely a code of meanings that is transmitted by language, but also a code of conversational rules or instituted language uses. Far from being a closed system, however, individual motives and activities enter this transmission and form the driving force behind it.

Chapter six examines patterns of spatial arrangement which not unlike language have often been regarded as being "the social" materialized. The chapter, based on an inductive method of recording spatial distance, shows that Hai||om spatial arrangements are reproduced over time, that patterns of individual autonomy and the permeability of group boundaries are not following an explicit blueprint but are retrieved from spacing behaviour and the settlement itself which condenses the past behaviour of its inhabitants. The chapter also shows that Hai||om settlement patterns are receptive to changing economic changes which lead to transformations of instituted practices.

Chapter seven shows that Hai||om ritual, despite its variability,

provides important arenas in which demand cooperation is reproduced even in a situation that is characterized by professional healers and intensive contacts with outsiders. In the Hai||om case, participants in the ritual are disengaged from the ritual as property by the very fact that the trance dance is imported from a neighbouring hunter-gatherer group. While again demonstrating cultural diversity, the characteristic mode of generating the social cooperation needed for performing the dance is reproduced even though the actual social composition may differ considerably.

Chapter eight, finally, shows that the identification of social arenas as ethnic and cultural units is itself a product of underlying social structures. That is to say, the way in which Hai||om conceive of economic differences as ethnic and cultural in character is contingent on more fundamental social strategies and established internal and external social relationships.

Returning to the very beginning of my thesis, I conclude that Hai||om cultural diversity and social flexibility cannot be theoretically mastered by simply referring to hunting and gathering as a mode of subsistence, nor with reference to ethnic or cultural group boundaries. The social life observed is not distinctive with regard to the wider economic conditions, nor with regard to the number of individual acts made over time. Rather the distinctive organizing principle lies on the level of social arenas and positions which are socially instituted and which provide the key to a successful analysis.

Appendix 1

Botanical Survey

The following list is an attempt to give an overview of wild foods gathered by ≠Akhoe Hai||om today along the lines of everyday usage. That is to say, plants and insects are not treated as separate categories but are dealt with together as they are during gathering trips. Furthermore, instead of classifying the species according to the categories of European botany (Story 1958, Rodin 1985), according to the part of the plant consumed (Marshall 1976), according to the emic terminology (as suggested by Barnard 1986), according to ecological vegetation zones and their plant communities (Lee 1979, Silberbauer 1981), or according to a combination of these categories (Giess and Snyman 1986, Heinz and Maguire n.d., Köhler 1992) I have tried to construct a categorization based on the practice of gathering in its widest sense. That is, plants and insects are grouped according to:

- the way they co-occurred in gathering returns of individual gathering trips and
- the way they were mentioned in conjunction when talking about the food resources of a place.

The combination of these two criteria allows us to distinguish plants that gatherers do and do not talk much about (such as the "ordinary" and the "specials") because they are either widely found and fairly equally distributed or because they only occur in small numbers and are widely dispersed. The plants that are often mentioned with regard to actual or potential gathering trips can be grouped around particularly salient fruits. In a number of cases specific plants and fruits are highlighted in everyday conversation while denoting, upon closer investigation, a number of other species. This allowed some mapping of these plant groups using symbols for the most salient plant or fruit although overlaps do occur (see figure 2.3).

Given that most botanical information was gathered at |Gomais or from Hai||om residents of |Gomais when travelling elsewhere and, given the practice framework adopted, the list of plants presented here bears a |Gomais bias. Hai||om in other parts of the country with other patterns of access to wild foods may group fruits and plants differently in their everyday usage. For instance, in my research area only a fairly narrow stretch of land between ≠Gîseb and Tsaubeb has most of the wild food resources that are considered important by the ≠Akhoe of |Gomais. It is therefore not surprising that many of the Hai||om now resident at |Gomais and other population centres who identify with places in the ≠Gîseb area are most emphatic about their requests to claim these traditional dwelling places and their abundance in natural resources.

The categories and labels I have used are constructs in so far as they do not represent an explicit Hai||om taxonomy. However, as I indicate in each case, there is a pattern with regard to words used to describe the plants and fruits and with regard to the place where these food sources occur which, in my view, warrants the categories and labels that I have chosen.

In order to make comparisons with the substantial ethnobotanical

work already existing I have tried to include under these categories information about the ecology, about the usage made of the species in question (food, medicine, handicraft material), and about the emic and etic categories. Wherever possible I have included the Latin names as well. All plants were photographed and described as they were collected but since no professional botanical advice was available, the exact species often could not be determined. The Hai||om taxonomy served as the guideline for my collection. In order to arrive at the identification of plants without having access to systematic botanical services I had to combine a number of sources, including photos provided by Story (1958) and descriptions provided by Rodin (1985) as well as translations of Owambo names (mostly well-known to Hai||om) provided by Rodin's ethnobotany of the Kwanyama (1985) and Turvey et al. (1977). Owambo names which could not be verified on this basis are given in quotation marks. It is quite possible that a systematic study of Hai||om and Owambo terminologies would show that the two systems are not always congruent with each other. The identification presented here remains incomplete but it should allow comparisons with the !Kung data (Story 1958, Marshall 1976, Lee 1979, Giess and Snyman 1986), and data from the central Kalahari (Tanaka 1976, Silberbauer 1981, Heinz and Maguire n.d.). These volumes contain very detailed descriptions of the plants as well as an indication of their nutritional value (see Lee 1973:310-1) which I do not want to repeat here.

As a consequence of my method of collecting botanical data there is one group of plants under-represented in my presentation. These plants may be called "weeds" (there is no such Hai||om term) because it consists of plants which are known and named but which are at present not used. It must be remembered that, as in European usage, the category of weeds is not fixed. I have only occasionally collected information on these plants, when asking about plants which I happened to come across. For example, *!gabab* (Ow: "*omubangela*", unidentified) a small plant which reminded me of the edible succulent plant photographed by Story (1958:99). When I asked whether the plant was edible, I was told that it was *soxa* and inedible. I have no doubt that there are many named but unused plants of this sort. The following list only contains plants that are currently used by ≠Akhoe Hai||om.

In terms of grammatical form, Hai||om uses the same word root to denote the fruit, with plural endings *-e* (uncountable), *-n* (neuter), *-te* (female), *-kwa* (male), and the plant itself, with singular gender endings *-s* (female) and *-b* (male). In those cases where fruit and plant are almost identical singular gender endings prevail. I have given the forms which were used in most cases in which reference to the fruits/plants was made.

The Ordinary Fruits

The following plants are commonly found on gathering trips at all times of the year. Their occurrence and usage is not discussed much because they are widespread and largely taken for granted.

1. | *Aru-e* (Ow: *ombibo*, *Vigna dinteri*). A vine that climbs high into trees so that the edible root often has to be traced from flowers and leaves that may be discovered at eye level or higher. Root consists of two or three fibrous tubers that may be eaten raw or cooked in ash. Potatoes are regarded as "white-people-|*aru*" because of their similar shape and taste. Very common at | Gomaïs but also at many other places. (Lee 1979:486, Rodin 1985:105).
2. !*Nabaris* (unidentified). A small (2cm) onion-like root, found all year round but less during the hot dry season. It is eaten raw or cooked in ashes. Spicy taste. A very similar plant is called !*gamaris*.
3. | *Horob* (Ow: "*ompalo*", unidentified). One of a number of roots that look and taste very similar to the more common | *aru*. | *Horob* has a single whitish root that branches at the bottom.
4. || *Nu-e* (unidentified). A potato-like root. The plant is not a vine but a low grass-like plant. The edible parts of the root are not tubers "on a string", as in the case of | *aru*, but next to each other and close to the surface. The root is smaller than | *aru* (3cm), less fibrous but juicier. || *Nu* is not frequently found, but it is often gathered together with the more common | *aru*.
5. || *Khai-e* (unidentified). Looks like a miniature onion but tastes similar to || *nu* (1cm). Similar species called !*ga-!gaba* (Ow: "*enyanga*").
6. *Xuanib* (Ow: "*nondinga*", unidentified). A root about 7cm in diameter and shaped like a millstone. Plant grows as a vine like | *aru*.
7. !*Ai-e* (Ow: "*embutu*", unidentified). A single root with small hairy roots and grass-like leaves. A very small plant, only about 15cm long.
8. || *Gaon* (unidentified). A plant with round, flat leaves and one long cone-shaped root (about 15-20cm long). Fibrous.
9. *Boxan*, also called || *nauben* in Damara (Ow: "*ewanda*", unidentified). A plant that looks and tastes like spinach.
10. || *Nâu-e* (unidentified). A root, larger than | *aru* and reddish/brown in colour with a pleasant sweet taste. Roasted in fire. Not found at | Gomaïs.
11. !*Nomeb* (Ow: *omudi*). A root similar to | *horob* but apparently scarce or

hardly gathered (see chapter four).

12. Several trees (including ||*khareb* and |*gab*, see below) produce *hairas*, resin or gum, which is collected and either eaten raw or, more frequently, pounded with mangetti nuts to add a sweet taste.

The Riverbed Foods

There are no permanent rivers in Hai||om country. However, several individuals have visited the Kavango river which, like all permanent waters, is feared for |*Khunu*, a dangerous being sometimes identified as a crocodile but also associated with shooting stars. The Kavango and the mostly dry Omuramba Owambo are both classified as *!ab* (river) but the Omuramba and other non-perennial streams or old watercourses are also called *dom*. In the ≠Akhoe area each *dom* stretches in an east-west direction. They are situated between permanent dunes of soft sand and characteristically the ground is hard. Riverbeds were popular travelling routes for the ox-cart expeditions of early explorers, hunters and traders.

13. *!Uni-e* (Ow: *omulunga*, fan palm, *Hyphaloe ventricosa*). The *!uni* palm is closely associated with the Omuramba Owambo. The fruit of this palm tree is about 6 cm in diameter but has only a fairly thin layer of edible fruit between the thin outer shell and the large kernel. Mostly eaten when dried for some time. Fibrous and sweet. Also used for brewing liquor. Kernels and leaves are used for handicrafts. Very local in distribution (Rodin 1985:118).

14. *!Khores* (identified in Rohlwink [1973:18] as *Adenium Bochimianum*, but possibly *!khore* as a generic term for poison (*xep* Afr. *gif*) refers to more than one plant species). Besides the *!uni*, this is the other important plant found in this area. It is a bush with colourful flowers and a large root. The poison is produced from the milky substance extracted from the root which is dug out as a whole (see photo 2.1). The poison is spread on iron arrowheads. It is lethal, also for humans.

15. Also common in this area is ≠*hûi-e* (Ow: *eembe* [fruit] *omuve* [tree], bird plum, *Berchemia discolor*). Less frequently found in the north. The fruit is popular for food and producing liquor like the *!uni* (Rodin 1985:123). Mentioned by Fourie (1966[1928]:89-9) as the fruit associated with the first fruit ceremony. Like *!uni*, this tree is also found in the eastern half of the Etosha reserve (South West Africa n.d.:47, 79).

16. *Anite* or *ani-e* (flying ants). Provide a rich, fatty and crunchy meal but only during a few days of the year, at the beginning of the short or long rainy season (usually November/December and January). At |Gomais anthills are only found in larger numbers in the dry pans between the main cattlepost and the Omuramba Owambo. Since gathering (or waiting to

gather) usually lasts several days, there is a notion of individual seasonal user rights to the anthill a person uses.

17. *Nou-e* (mushrooms). Also found for a short period during the year, at the peak of the rainy season, at the foot of anthills. About 20cm in length the white-grey *nou-e* can be eaten raw and are frequently offered for sale to white farmers. They are best when dug out as soon as cracked ground around the anthill indicates the presence of a mushroom and before they surface.

The Seasonal Foods

The following plants are not considered important because of their fruit but because they are useful as raw material for handicrafts of all sorts and because they are home to a number of insects that serve as food. All fruit is seasonal but in the case of the peculiar "fruit" of the trees listed below availability is particularly short. In this regard it is comparable to *anite* and *nou-e* but the latter two are more localized and are often collected on special gathering trips while those listed below may be gathered together with *gom-e* or many of the "common" roots.

18. ||*Khareb* (Ow: *omutundungu*, wild sering, *Burkea africana*). Provides soft wood for making mortars and produces edible gum (Rodin 1985:94, Lee 1979:469). At the beginning of the rainy season ||*guo* (a species of caterpillars) are found on this tree (sometimes hidden under the bark). ||*Guo* (Ow: "*kuakole*") are easy to collect and after cleaning them (squeezing out the inside) and cooking them for about 45 minutes they provide a meal that tastes distinctly vegetarian. The bark of the ||*khareb* tree (cooked in water) is also used as a remedy against cough.

19. |*Gab* tree (Ow: *omwoolo*; silver tumimalia tree; *Terinalia sericea*). Home to another type of caterpillar called ||*guxabe* (Ow: "*omaungu*"). Slightly bigger than ||*guo* and more colourful (yellow-black) than the green ||*guo*, ||*guxabe* are also highly seasonal and appear shortly after the ||*guo*. In the |*Gomais* area they are slightly less common than ||*guo*. They are prepared the same way. There are a number of other edible caterpillars I was told about (≠*arerobe*, !*gedanise*) which are all covered under a generic term |*iru* (grubs). This includes another species called *xandaxane*. These grubs are found in animal corals and have to be dug out of the mud and menure of cattle. They are thick and beige in colour.

20. *Boron*. An (unidentified) black beetle which is mostly found on ≠*aro* trees (see below). The longish (4-5cm) beetle is cooked in ashes and provides a crunchy meal, particularly liked by children.

The Staple Fruit

Mangetti is a category of its own, not only because of its superabundance and importance as a staple fruit, but also because it has so many different uses ranging from raw consumption to oil production and liquor distilling.

21. | *Gom-e* (Ow: *omunghete* [tree] *omanghete* [fruit], *Ricinodendron Rautanenii*). The fruit of a large spreading tree. The female tree bears a fruit that consists of a fleshy outside and a hard shelled nut. Both are very nutritious. (Lee 1979:182-204, Rodin 1985:76-77)

The wood of the mangetti tree is not very good for making fires but it is used for making bellows and other artifacts. Other trees used for various purposes such as hut construction are || *ganab* (Ow: *omwoonde*, camelthorn tree), !*goab* (Ow: *omupapa*, Rhodesian Teak tree), !*gobwa* (Ow: *eno*, Acacia sp.), ≠*gurib* (Ow: *oluxwango*, mopani thicket), | *naob* (Ow: *olukula* or *omuuva*, Rhodesian Teak tree) (see Heikkinen n.d. [c]). For bows the wood of the | *goeb* (Ow: *ongete* or *omatjetti*, thorn or sickle-bush, *Dichrostachys cinerea*) is most often used (Lee 1979:469, Rodin 1985:97).

The Liquor Fruits

These fruits are abundant during the season but since they contain little liquid or fruit flesh they have to be consumed in large quantities. Most commonly associated with food collecting for liquor production although while on a !*haro* (gathering) expedition large quantities are also consumed on a day-to-day basis. This is not an exclusive category since other fruits such as !*uni-e* and | *gom-e* (mangettis) are also used for distilling. In this category most fruits are berries which dry on the bush. They remain usable even if dry (they are then mostly pounded with water) so that they are available during most of the year.

22. || *Ari-e* (Ow: *eeshe* [fruit] *omushe* [tree], *Grewia deserticola*). This fruit of a shrub or small tree is small and has relatively little fruit flesh so that usually large quantities are gathered. (Lee 1979:483-4, Rodin 1985:131-2)

23. ≠*Naun* (Ow: *omandjebele*, *Grewia* sp.). A very similar fruit to || *ari*.

24. *Khube-e* (Ow: *oshipeke*, sow-plum or ximenia bush species). A fruit about 2cm in diameter. Orange or red and soft. Eaten raw or used for liquor.

25. ≠*Oro-e* (Ow: "emeka"). A hard red berry of about 1cm long. Cooked and then sucked out. Also used for distilling liquor.

26. !*Hom!hom-e* (Ow: *omumbu*, wild medlar, *Vangueria* sp.) Fruit of a large

shrub or small tree (Lee 1979:472, Rodin 1985:126). The red fruit (2cm) can be eaten raw or dried and is also used for liquor production. At | Gomaïs and surrounding areas not as frequent as ||ari and ≠nau. Mostly eaten raw.

27. || Uisa-e (Ow: *odive* [fruit], *omukwiyu* [tree], Sycamore fig-tree, *Ficus sycomorus*). Fruit of a high-growing tree, eaten raw or used for liquor (Rodin 1985:115).

28. | Hoku | *hone-e* an unidentified red fruit for which I collected a number of names (≠huba≠hune, !huni!huni, !huka!huni, ≠nora!huni). A red fruit, 1-2cm in diameter, with very diverse shapes.

29. *Goaro-e* (Ow: *omwoongo*, *Sclerocarya caffra*, marula). The nuts of these large trees are very typical for *olambika* (liquor) brewing elsewhere. At | Gomaïs and elsewhere in ≠Akhoe country there are individual marula trees but their usage is negligible compared to that of the mangetti tree. The fruit contains a number of small edible nuts which are more difficult to obtain than the mangetti. At | Gomaïs I have seen *goaro* which were left untouched until only the shell remained (Lee 1979:482, Rodin 1985:49).

The Bitter Fruits

This fruit is known to be edible and usable but is not much favoured. Since it covers much of the sandy dry area between ≠Giseb and | Gomaïs where little other food is found, it is regarded as food for emergency situations or for further processing. It is considered to be *au* (bitter).

30. ≠Aro-e (Ow: *eenghekete*, come and I'll kiss you, wag 'n beetjie or buffalo thorn, *Zizyphus mucronata*). Berry somewhat bigger than ≠nau but only eaten when cooked, otherwise bitter (*au*). Popular as a basis for distilling liquor (Lee 1979:472, Rodin 1985:124). During the rainy season the *boron* (black beetles, unidentified) are found on these trees.

31. *Tsaman* (Ow: *etanga*, *Citrullus lanatus*). A melon that is found in a great variety of sizes and tastes (Lee 1979:488, Rodin 1985:67-8). Most varieties found in the ≠Akhoe area are classified as *au* (bitter). The plant is largely ignored possibly because it is difficult to determine from the outside whether the fruit is bitter or not. *Tsama* are often used by children as instruments when playing games or when making dolls.

32. | Hunib (Ow: *omunghudi*, shepherd's tree, emigrant's tree). Roots 20cm to over one metre long are dug up and traded with Owambo who use them for producing sour milk.

33. || Nam (Ow: *kaufifi*, *Cucumis* sp.). About 4cm long, cucumber-like plant,

with prickles, eaten raw.

34. *Gâ-e* (Ow: "etanga" or "enangashishi"). Like ||*nam* a creeper, but fruit somewhat bigger (5cm in diameter), with prickles, cooked in ashes.

The Non Plus Ultra

These are the fruits used to describe the pleasures of living in the bush. Hai||om visiting areas where these fruits are available are invariably asked to bring some or to report on their state of ripeness. *!Gâi* (good, sweet) is the adjective that is typically included in a description of these fruits.

35. *!No-e* (Ow: *omauni*, wild orange, *Strychnos cocculoides*) have the size of an orange but are protected by a hard shell. Owambo often keep the fruit in millet storages while Hai||om use underground burrows. The juicy fruit is very sweet when ripe and is very much liked. The question whether *!no* are already ripe is a frequent topic of discussion. (Lee 1979:482, Rodin 1985:109)

36. *≡Kheia-e* (Ow: *omupwaka* (tree), Bushman's orange tree, *Strychnos pungens*). Fruit looks very similar to *!no* but more solid inside (Lee 1979:482, Rodin 1985:109). Less frequent than *!no* but used in the same way. There is a tree with a similar sounding name (*≡khea*) which bears no fruit but which is used for handicrafts, especially for making bows.

37. *Tsi'xa-e* (Ow: *omukokofi*, *Diospyros chamaethamnus*). A small bush with orange to dark red, soft fruits (about 3cm in diameter). A favourite fruit that is only eaten raw (Rodin 1985:72, Lee 1979:468).

38. *Ndi-e* (Ow: "matjalala"). Similar to *tsi'xa* and found in the same area. A red plum-like fruit that ripens before *tsi'xa*. Taste not very sweet, a bit like papaya.

The Plants of the North

These fruits are associated with the places where Hai||om resided before the war, especially at the service centres of the Finnish missionaries in the extreme north of Namibia. For the majority of ≡Akhoe today they are negligible as food items. However, in combination with the *non plus ultra* fruits mentioned above, which are also found north of |Gomais, these fruits are an important hallmark of better living conditions paired with at times nostalgic sentiments.

39. |*Gui-e* (Ow: *eeshi* (fruit), *omushii* (tree), chivi tree, *Guibourtia*

coleosperma) (Lee 1979:470, Rodin 1985:98-9). Red bean-like fruits which are cooked in ashes in the following manner: a hollow shell of the *!no* fruit is pierced several times, filled with *|gui-e* and with hot sand taken from underneath a fire. The sand is then shaken out through the holes and the *|gui-e* can be cracked and freed of their shell so that the hot ashes can run through. Having been cooked in water the *|gui-e* are eaten. They have an almond-like taste.

40. *Saub* or *saubei* (Ow: *efimba*). A tall tree like *|gui*, with edible fruit.

41. *||Go-e* (Ow: *omwila*, *Grewia falcistipula*). A shrub with highly prized, very sweet berries (yellow, larger than those of other *Grewia* sp.). Only grows north of \neq Giseb. Area and direction named after this berry. (Rodin 1985:132, Lee 1979:472)

The Specials

The following fruits are only occasionally found in gathering returns and are characterized by some specialized usage.

42. *!Gui* (unidentified). Grass-like plant. Oblong leaves (30cm long), light green with dark green stripes, are heated in ashes for a few seconds then twisted so that liquid is produced which can be poured into ears when bleeding.

43. *||Garu-e* (Ow: "*nixwa*"). Branches heated over fire and applied to aching body parts.

44. *|Khera*. A small bush with hard white-brown fruits which are put in fire and then rubbed on nose as a remedy against cough.

45. *Sâ-e* (perfumed powder). Gained from a number of trees including *!abub* (Ow: "*omubango*") and *|garob* (Ow: "*omupelala*") but above all from *|nao*. *Sâ-e* It is used in every medicine dance but also in other contexts.

46. *|Nao-e*. Red powder of the *|nao* tree (Ow: *omuuva*, *Pterocarpus angolensis*, African teak) (Lee 1976:470, Rodin 1985:102-3). *|Nao* is a very large tree only found in the northern part of \neq Akhoe country. In the past it was probably the most important plant trade item with Owambo, who used it as a colouring device and for body lotions. The availability of industrial products but apparently also its association with "traditional" or "heathen" life-style led to a drop in Owambo demand for *|nao* (see Loeb 1960:185). Still used as a gift among Hai||om women and employed as a cosmetic. Also used in the medicine dance by the *!gaiaob* who rubs it as *sâ* under the noses of participants and across their heads.

47. *!Gaidom* (unidentified, no Owambo name known). A root of a small plant that grows only in the north (≠Gîseb area and further north). Commonly used as a medical-protective plant. The longish, brown root (about 2-4cm) is often strung onto a necklace and worn by children and adults together with other substances such as a scale taken from a pangolin or the fruit of the *||goeb* but is much more common than these. Often given as a present to new-born babies. If the child cries without apparent reason, parents should bite off a bit of the *!gaidom*, chew it and then spit it out.

48. *Gû* or *sôa*, a tree sponge. Used as charcoal when striking fire in the tonteldoos (tinder box).

49. *!Gai!gara* or ≠gai≠gara (Ow: *oshene*). Wood used for carving mortars but above all for making pipes. When no tobacco is available the nicotine-impregnated wood itself is carved off inside the pipe and smoked as *ersatz* tobacco.

50. *|Ani-e* (unidentified). Beans of a shrub which are dried and then used to make coffee.

51. *|Gaobe* (unidentified). A fragrant, small (about 30cm high), bushy plant put into hot water to make tea.

Appendix 2

Crime statistics

(Oshivelo police station 1990 and 1991)

a) 1990 and 1991			
Conviction	Owambo	"Bushmen"	others
illegal hunting	25 (29%)	6 (12%)	
stocktheft	4 (5%)	17 (33%)	
other thefts	22 (26%)	10 (20%)	
assault	26 (30%)	12 (24%)	7
other crimes	9 (10%)	6 (12%)	2
TOTAL	86 (100%)	51 (100%)	

NB: Reported cases without convictions: illegal hunting (4), stocktheft (10), other thefts (18), assault (2). Figures have been rounded.

b) 1991 only			
Conviction	Owambo	"Bushmen"	others
illegal hunting	6 (15%)	2 (10%)	
stocktheft	1 (2%)	5 (25%)	
other thefts	14 (35%)	3 (15%)	
assault	14 (35%)	9 (45%)	7
other crimes	6 (15%)	1 (5%)	
TOTAL	41 (100%)	20 (100%)	

NB: Reported cases without conviction: illegal hunting (3), stocktheft (6), other thefts (7), assault (2).

c) 1990 only			
Conviction	Owambo	"Bushmen"	others
illegal hunting	19 (42%)	4 (12%)	
stocktheft	3 (7%)	12 (39%)	
other thefts	8 (18%)	7 (23%)	
assault	12 (27%)	3 (10%)	
other crimes	3 (7%)	5 (16%)	2
TOTAL	45 (100%)	31 (100%)	

NB: Reported cases without conviction: illegal hunting (1), stocktheft (4), other thefts (11).

Appendix 3

Settlement survey (January/February 1991)

The following two tables contain data collected on an initial survey of ≠Akhoe settlements north of | Gomas. Note that the survey was done in the wet season when most ≠Akhoe stay in their main, semi-permanent or permanent settlement. Therefore the survey does not contain any temporary "bush camps" as they are found during the dry season (see chapter six).

a) Camp profile (number of residents, number of huts, location)

No.	Residents	Huts	Location
1	6m, 6w, 4c	4 huts, 1 shelter, <i>olupare</i>	in field, near Owambo and wells
2	2m, 2w, 2c	3 huts, 3 shelters, palisades	in field, bordering Owambo, near wells
3	3m, 3w, 4c	3 huts, 3 shelters, palisades	in field, bordering Owambo, near wells
4	4m, 4w, 18c in three sites	a) 3 huts, 1 shelter, partly palis. b) 4 huts, 1 shelter, palisades c) 2 huts, palisades	next to field, near Owambo and wells
5	2m, 2w, 4c	4 huts, 1 shelter	in field, bordering Owambo, far from well
6	three sites a) 2m, 4w, 6c b) 1m, 1w, 5c c) 1m, 1w, 1c	a) 2 huts, <i>olupare</i> b) 4 huts, <i>olupare</i> c) 5 huts, <i>olupare</i>	in field, bordering Owambo, near wells

7	4m, 3w, 7c	8 huts, 1 shelter, palisade	in field, near Owambo and wells
8	2m, 3w, 2c	4 huts	bordering Owambo, near wells
9	3m, 3w, 4c	3 huts	in field, near Owambo and waterhole
10	9m, 8w, 12c in two sites	a) 3 huts, <i>olupare</i> b) 3 huts <i>olupare</i>	in field, near Owambo, far from wells
11	3m, 3w, 2c	3 huts, 6 grass huts, 1 shelter	in field, near Owambo and waterhole
12	3m, 3w, 6c	7 huts, 1 shelter, 2 <i>olupare</i>	in field, near water and waterhole
13	4m, 4w, 6c	6 huts, 2 shelters, 2 <i>olupare</i>	in field, bordering Owambo, near well
14	5m, 5c, 4c	4 huts, 4 grass huts	near Owambo and waterhole
15	3m, 3w, 2c in two sites	a) 2 huts, 1 shelter, <i>olupare</i> b) 1 hut, 1 shelter, <i>olupare</i>	in field, bordering Owambo cattlepost, near pump
16	1m, 3w, 3c	5 huts, <i>olupare</i>	bordering field and Owambo, near waterhole
17	5m, 5w, 11c	3 huts, 5 grass huts, 2 shelters, <i>olupare</i>	in field, bordering Owambo and pump
18	4m, 4w, 6c	9 huts, 1 shelter, <i>olupare</i>	in field, bordering Owambo, near waterhole

NB: Only residents were counted whom I met during my stay (usually two or three days). The number of children is likely to be understated because many children spend their time visiting elsewhere including in Owambo homesteads. Residents were counted as male (m), female (f) or as not yet married/children (c). Dwellings are listed as "huts" when they were in Owambo-style and as "shelters" if they consisted of an improvised shade roof. *Olupare* is an Owambo-style reception and fire place consisting of logs and a row of palisades (see chapter six). Unless noted otherwise, the settlements were fenced with branches or a simple barrier.

b) Economic profile (animals/livestock, tools, fields/gardens and millet storage facilities)

No.	Animals	Tools	Fields
1	5 chicken, 4 dogs	4 hoes, mortar, bellows, bows	ca 1300m ² , ‡goams
2	1 chicken, 3 dogs	5 hoes, spade, bows, pounding	ca 2700m ² , 2 ‡goamte
3	4 chicken, 3 dogs	2 hoes, bows, pounding	ca 7800m ² , 1 ‡goams
4	10 chicken, 3 dogs	7 hoes, bows, pounding	a) ca 2400m ² b) ca 3800m ² c) ca 5900m ²
5	4 chicken, 3 dogs, (some goats)	hoes, pounding, bows	ca 50000m ² , 4 ‡goamte
6	1 dog	1 hoe, pounding, wooden arrow-heads	a) ca 1700m ² b) and c) not measured
7	chicken, dogs	7 hoes, bows, pounding,	ca 34000m ² , 2 ‡goamte
8	none	none	no garden
9	2 chicken 2 dogs	mortar, bows	ca 5400m ²
10	3 chicken, 2 dogs, (some goats)	2 hoes, pounding, bellows, bows	ca 12000m ²
11	none	mortar, bows	ca 5400m ²

No.	Animals	Tools	Fields
12	7 chicken, 2 dogs	2 hoes, pounding, bellows, bows	ca 5000 ²
13	6 chicken, dogs	hoes, bows 2 pounding,	ca 5400m ² , 2 <i>†goamte</i>
14	2 chicken	bows	no fields
15	1 dog, (some goats)	mortar, bellows, bows	ca 1800m ²
16	3 chicken (some goats and cattle)	mortar, bellows, bow	ca 6000m ²
17	4 chicken	5 hoes, mortar	ca 16000 ²
18	2 dogs	hoes, pounding, bellows, bows	ca 15600 ²

NB: This table adds some economic data to the settlements listed in table a. Chicken, and often also dogs, are not fed but left to find their own food. The figures for goats and cattle are not very reliable. Since most Hai||om have their goats and cattle herded by an Owambo livestock owner (see chapter two), it is not always easy to find out how many head they in fact own. In the table I distinguish portable "mortars" from fixed "pounding" facilities. Both are used to pound millet but the latter are holes in a fixed platform made of clay. The Hai||om millet storage containers (*†goams*, *pl. †goamte*) are usually smaller than the average Owambo storage.

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